

Summer 2000

# international crossroads **very** vienna



**Missouri Southern State College**  
**University of Vienna**







It was that week in November when Americans celebrate Thanksgiving Day. It was 1998, and as I left my home in Joplin, Missouri, and met my three traveling colleagues at the airport in Tulsa, Oklahoma, there were news reports and U.S. State Department warnings about possible terrorist attacks against Americans in Vienna during the next 48 hours.

We were due in Vienna the next morning, a Sunday, and on Monday we had appointments to keep. We arrived on a very cold day in Vienna, and on our way to our hotel we did pass streets that had been blocked off because of alleged terrorist threats against the American Embassy, against American businesses, and against some hotels with large contingencies of American visitors. Our taxi driver told us, however, that we were safe. At our hotel we received the same reassurances that we were safe and we need not worry.

The bitter cold of the weather, thus, was overcome by the warmth of Austrians, and despite the light snow which fell that Sunday evening and coated the ground that next morning, the four of us were entranced and captivated by the beauty of Vienna and by the hospitality of its people. On Monday morning we met with Professor Thomas Bauer of the University of Vienna, and from students in the building who guided us to his office, to secretaries who assisted and gave us warming beverages, to the professor himself, there was something very special about this day.

It was the day we sat, drank wonderful coffee, enjoyed sparkling conversation, and discussed a cooperative program between our college, Missouri Southern State College, and the University of Vienna. The results of that cooperation were to include the issue of *International Crossroads* which you now hold in your hands; an international conference on our home campus on multicultural journalism; and the opportunities for students from the University of Vienna to experience short internships on American community newspaper and in other media. It was a good meeting, followed that week by other successful meetings throughout France and Germany, working toward a spirit of cooperation among student journalists.

This edition, then, of *International Crossroads* is much more than a collection of pictures and stories about Vienna and the Austrian people. It is an example of the kind of cooperation that needs to exist between student journalists all over the world. After all, student journalists all seek the same goals: To be purveyors of truth, defenders of freedom, and promoters of peace.

We at Missouri Southern State College have taken various steps in establishing as our college-wide mission of education an emphasis on internationalism in all its aspects. We sponsor many programs of travel and study abroad for our own students, for example, and we have developed an Initiative for Peace which seeks to use this publication and our college newspaper *The Chart* as occasional vehicles by which we can tell the stories of the ravages of war and the desires for peace and demonstrate examples of cooperative ventures. Too, we hope very much to establish a World Press Center for journalism students from every nation, where they can come to discuss their mutual problems and concerns and find new avenues for expressing their own dreams and aspirations for journalism around the world. We have participated in conferences in various countries, including the Student Voice in Croatia, and we have heard the requests for more information about the role of the media in today's society and tomorrow's world.

This publication of *International Crossroads*, therefore, is but a step - an example - in that direction. We at Missouri Southern State College are appreciative of the work, the efforts, the talents, and the dedication shown by Professor Bauer's students in putting out this edition. We are proud of our association with these individuals and with the University of Vienna and we seek such associations and relationships with other universities and other groups of students. We welcome the comments of our readers and their contributions to future editions of this magazine, and we welcome and seek their support in the establishment of the World Press Center. You may contact me at: [Stebbins-c@mail.mssc.edu](mailto:Stebbins-c@mail.mssc.edu)

To our readers who have not been to Vienna: Take this edition and savor the magnificence and variety of this city and plan a visit there someday soon. Then visit the rest of Austria. You will have an unforgettable experience.

And for now, I wish you a rewarding reading experience.

Chad D. Stebbins, Director  
Institute of International Studies  
Missouri Southern State College  
Joplin, MO



VERY VIENNA, presented to American students by their Viennese colleagues, was produced in a course at the University of Vienna, Austria. The purpose of this project is to create a forum for dialogue and cultural exchange in order to free journalism on cultural issues and cultural communication from stereotypes which are convenient and quickly sold, but are nonetheless merely self-satisfactory and interchangeable decals.

The overall goal of this course is to make the dialogue between cultures resistant; to make the richness visible that lies within cultural contradictions and idiosyncrasies. It is only in the (perceptible ) contradiction of cultures that a dialogue of worldviews originates. This contradiction - which is likely to emerge - only injures if one tends toward producing one's own self-esteem from another person's judgment.

However, the contradiction is not a catastrophe but is the path leading to an awareness of the plurality of this world's ways of expression, and the possibility of learning from each other. If the difference of cultures can be intertwined while keeping in mind the distribution of economic chances of survival, then we could succeed in developing global conditions for cultural plurality. As long as this is not the case, the temptation to practice cultural prostitution is too big.

Cultural journalism is more than the mere description of one's own or a foreign culture. Cultural journalism should become aware of its purpose to facilitate and initiate dialogue and cultural mediation, and unfold its capacity for being a connector between cultures.

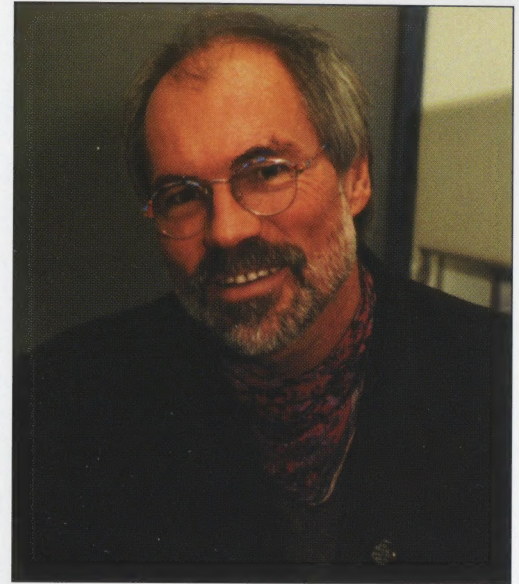
This is undoubtedly a much more difficult mission than the mere selling of stories which offers the audience relief via well-known clichés. Cultural communication is political communication, even if it is - and of course it is allowed to be - entertaining. There are so many stereotypes about Vienna, Austria's capital, but it is a really outstanding city. This opinion is not based on the city's immaculate picture-postcard-scenery or its spotless appearance. It is a city worth living in due to the psychic excitements between history and the present time. Moreover, Austrians are neither out of touch with contemporary events nor out of touch with history.

Sometimes my feeling is that people living in the "new world", look with special admiration and mystifying gaze to the history of old Europe, simplifying, blurring and especially trivializing cultural life. Austria's and Vienna's history is not only reflected by the surviving beautiful architecture, but is also mirrored in the mentality of the people living there. History can be read from the faces of the common people and not just from the exteriors of imperial buildings.

It is important for us to convey honestly and accurately the meaning of our own culture when encountering people from other cultures since our own identity is part of how others perceive us. At a certain point, it is not enough to consider that Americans or other visitors are in love with a cute, literally fabulous, sleepy nest of imperially dressed up puppets in order to build an urban or national identity for a political, economic, and cultural present that allows us to stand up straight. At a certain point, the Mozartkugeln, the Lippizzanners, and the ski-idols that invigorate tourism will show themselves for what they are: constructs of a market that are only viable as long as there are consumers for them.

However, it might well be true that people in Vienna and Austria are likely to think in a slower, more deliberative, prudent way which pays more careful consideration to that which has come before. History is alive in Austria, especially in Vienna. In this sense, Vienna is a historical terrarium. The tendency to wall this city in, isolate, and mold it into a theme park transforms Vienna into a museum where visitors can admire what they would never surround themselves with in their own daily lives.

VERY VIENNA is an attempt to show Vienna's daily face to you who have probably only known Vienna's museums and holiday-sides and sights. VERY VIENNA tries to give you an impression of what Vienna really looks like, sounds like, tastes like, and lives like. Enjoy our articles and please take notice of the invitation to respond and share your opinion and experiences with us. Take a look at our webpage:

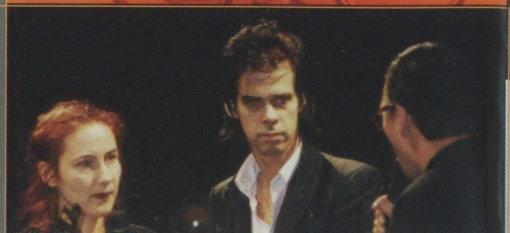
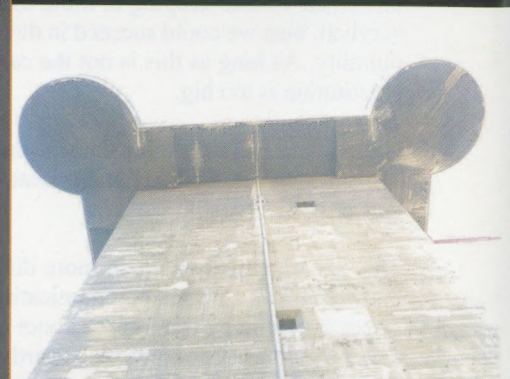
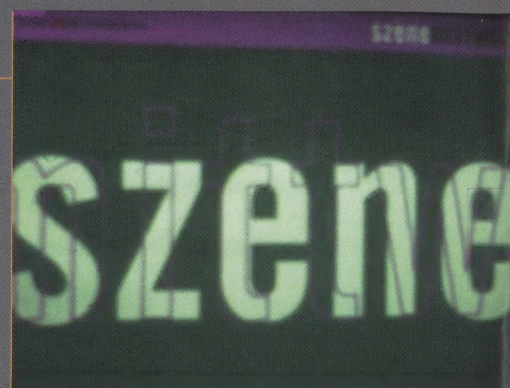


Prof. Dr. Thomas A. Bauer  
Project Head  
Department of Communication and Media Studies  
University of Vienna



## VERY VIENNA

Editorial	2
Imprint	6
Introduction	7
The Gigant Wheel: What's So Very Vienna?	8
Recent Changes on Austria's Political landscape. Two Statements	12
Morbid, Neurotic and Racial? An Essay about the Austrian Mentality	15
Lost Neighborhood	16
Where the Jordan-River Flows Into the Danube. Jews in Vienna.	18
Jeans, Kebab and Austria's Alienation - A Critical Review	19
To Be Or Not To Be. Roma and Sinti in Austria	20
The Streets of Vienna. Homeless People and Their Medias	21
You Only Have To Listen. Austrian's Private Radio Stations	22
Murmurings in the Austrian Press	24
The ORF - Television and Media Policy	25
Helmut and the Herminator. TV-Spots Made in Austria	26
Austrian versus German. Different Languages or Dialects?	27
Living and Working in Vienna. An Interview	28





Disorientation Through Unlimited Freedom? The University of Vienna	30
Cinemarevolt beyond Hollywood The Vienna Film Academy	34
Faces... Vienna is Different - the Other Side	36
Poetry Slams in Vienna. Or The Simple Way to Mediate Literature	38
Modern and Contemporary Austrian Art	40
M.I.P. This Museum Comes to You	42
Electric Sound of Vienna	44
All the Things You Are. Jazz Report	46
Rosenball - the Different Ball	49
The Viennese Opera Ball. And Some More Balls	50
The School of Poetry in Vienna - laboratory for a new generation	52
Small Theatre - Big Performance. When Enthusiasm is More Important than Money	54
The Gasometers - Monuments of the Industrial Age, Pioneers of a New Life Style	56
Heaven Over Vienna. The Flak Towers - Unwanted Heritage from the Third Reich	58
The Presence of the Past. Austria and It's Struggle with Hitler's Legacy	60
And What About the Couch? In Search of Sigmund Freud	62
Vienna States of Mind	64
Starbucks versus Coffee House	66
A Taste of Vienna. Eating and Drinking	68
What We Austrians Think About Americans	70





# Very Vienna - Very Online

For all those who want to see more of Vienna and, above all, for those who want to hear how Vienna sounds, we have created a Homepage. "Http://www.univie.ac.at/very-vienna" is not just a tool that we offer to you in addition to the magazine, but it is also a technical challenge for us. We are sure that all of you, especially the computer-freaks, are going to appreciate an interesting and modern view of Vienna via the Internet.

The homepage is an extension to the magazine, bringing Vienna as close to you as possible. All the articles printed in the magazine are available on the Homepage, supplemented with accoustic and visual bits and pieces, such as different sounds from the city, pictures, video-clips and music. All this and a variety of links to other exciting pages in the Internet make it possible for you to experience a virtual voyage through Vienna. Useful information from a students point of view may help you when travelling to Vienna.

Have a nice trip to and through Vienna!  
See you in Austria soon.

**<http://www.univie.ac.at/very-vienna>**



## VIENNA LINKS

The next 70 pages, you'll find a lot of interesting information from different points of view about our city. For further information, we arranged a compilation of Austrian and Viennese links, of course incomplete and subjectively chosen. All are english editions, or at least, feature english short-versions/abstracts. If you can not find what you are looking for, please contact our homepage, we will try to help you!



### Culture:

(see also the official sites)

#### **[www.club.at](http://www.club.at)**

Information about Viennese electronic music clubs

#### **[www.sfd.at](http://www.sfd.at)**

The "Schule für Dichtung" (see page 52) has emigrated into cyberspace

### Webcams/IT:

#### **[www.vienna.at/viennacam](http://www.vienna.at/viennacam)**

#### **[www.rlbnoew.at](http://www.rlbnoew.at)**

#### **[www.a-site.at/special/webcams/htm](http://www.a-site.at/special/webcams/htm)**

#### **[www.powerfox.net/travel/vienna.shtml](http://www.powerfox.net/travel/vienna.shtml)**

an electronic city-map

#### **[www.austria-www.at/links](http://www.austria-www.at/links)**

an Austrian search-engine in english!

#### **[www.vienna.cc](http://www.vienna.cc)**

lots of pictures!

### Official/Political Sites:

#### **[www.wien.at/english](http://www.wien.at/english)**

City of Vienna-official site including a lot of information and links about accomodation, culture etc. and also an official political statement of the socialist city-government

#### **[www.austria-tourism.at](http://www.austria-tourism.at)**

Information about cultural events (such as opera and theater), accomodation and general information, edited by the Austrian National Tourist Office

#### **[www.univie.ac.at](http://www.univie.ac.at)**

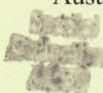
University of Vienna

#### **<http://webring.telnet.at>**

A compilation of anti-government pages, some of them in english

#### **[www.doew.at](http://www.doew.at)**

The Documentation Centre of Austrian Resistance (founded by anti-fascist fighters after WWII, the DÖW is an institute for historical research)



## Imprint

EDITORS Chad Stebbins, Thomas A. Bauer  
EXECUTIVE EDITORS Margit Wolfsberger, Michael Rederer  
ADVISOR Jean Campbell  
LAYOUT/ARTWORK Lars Anton van Roosendaal, Otto Fritsch, Corina Vetsch  
LAYOUT ASSISTANCE Barbara Wimmer, Georg Schenk  
COVER LAYOUT Cati Krüger, Corina Vetsch  
COVER PICTURES Barbara Seyr  
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE by MediaService Vienna  
WEB-MISTRESS Susanne Angelina Fürnkranz  
LECTORS Martina Anzinger, Laura Balomiri, Joshua Korn  
WORDS AND VISUALS see Articles



# A Cultural Crossroads Guide for Americans and Austrians

by: Martina Anzinger and Laura Balomiri

Ever heard of Austria? No? Well, that's no surprise. Austria is probably too small a country and too far away from the USA to be well-known there. However, there is still a slight chance that you have come across something "Austrian" even in the US.



Picture source: [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)

For instance, Arnold Schwarzenegger - he is Austrian. Or The Sound of Music, a musical based on the true story of an Austrian family and shot entirely in Austria. In the opening sequence Julie Andrews - singing, of course - is roaming the idyllic Austrian Alps. But singing and mountaineering is not all Austrians do: ever seen Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade? Then recall the scene in which Indy and his Dad are prisoners of the Nazis in Schloss Brunwald, an Austrian castle, and the very Austrian Elsa Schneider, having kissed Indy passionately, leaves him, saying: "That's the way Austrians say good-bye!"

For now, however, let's just try and say hello! If you are not that much of a movie-goer, there are other things that Austria has to offer: coffee, music, history, baroque architecture. The skier Hermann Maier; the composers Mozart,

Händel, Haydn and Strauss; the author of The Blue Room, Arthur Schnitzler; the father of psychoanalysis, Sigmund Freud - all of them are Austrians.

But there is more to this - and any - culture. Austria, the Austrians and Austrian mentality have many facets. Here's an Austrian-American guide to Vienna. Enjoy!

PLEASE TURN OVER



mentality

# The Giant Wheel: What's So Very Vienna?

by Martina Anzinger and Laura Balomiri

The Giant Wheel as the philosophy of Vienna lifestyle: Do the Viennese American feel at home in this environment? Or do Americans come to Vienna to look for that certain 'otherness'? What are the main cultural and historical differences and similarities?

As any tourist guide will tell you, Vienna is among the least spoilt of the great European capitals. But that is just an empty phrase that fails to describe the fullness of life and the numberless incarnations – cultural, historical, political, social – that Vienna assumes. One can spend endless hours in cafes, listen to music in the concert halls and stroll through a city that still looks very much like it did centuries ago. Still, Vienna is everything else than a backward-looking city, and although the traditional 'Lebenskunst' (art of living) has survived to the present day, the pace of everyday life is just as alert and the spirit as progressive as in any other capital city. Today, Vienna is fighting to preserve its crucial role in European history: once the seat of the Holy Roman Empire, or the capital of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, it is now a diplomatic center, the seat of the OPEC or the UNO, the old and new bridge between East and West. Similarly, it is fighting to come to terms with its less glorious past as part of NAZI Germany.

As specialists in Austro-American Cultural Studies, Dr. Draxlbauer, Prof.

Mayer and Prof. Welsh, (see photos) were able to tell us something about what Americans need to know in order to understand Austria and the Austrians.

Mr. Mayer, who is teaching a seminar on "Roads in/of American culture and literature" at the University of Vienna, states that *cultural roads in America are channeled in different ways. I would not talk so much about differences, however, as I would talk of distinctions.*

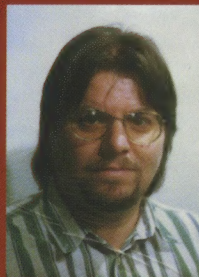
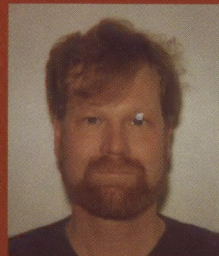
These "distinctions" are also pointed out by Professor Welsh. In his opinion, *the biggest difference lies in the burden of history that Austria has and the US doesn't have. US students are very a-historical, they have no sense of a long past. In Austria you can't avoid the presence of the buildings from the Gruenderzeit, you can't avoid the history of a monarchy that lasted till the early part of this century, and, going along with that, the assumption that there is a social order.*

You termed an 'historical burden', why? *Burden is not necessarily negative, but it is an awareness that there is a historical*



Mr. Mayer was the first one to hand in a dissertation to the specifically American section of the English department of the University of Vienna. Mr. Mayer's connection with America goes back to his prep-school days. He later spent two years at an American university.

Professor Keith Welsh's experiences of Vienna began as a student at Vienna University. He returned as an Associate Professor of English at Vienna's Webster University.



Mr. Draxlbauer is an Associate Professor at the Department of English and American Studies at the University of Vienna, teaching courses on American and Canadian literatures and on American Civilization.



*back-ground, an old social order. Americans tend to reject that notion. Although we are a class-based society, we claim that we're not, and I think that Americans don't understand class as well as Austrians.*

US democracy is considered the first true democracy in the world, postulating the separation of powers. Does the concept of democracy necessarily imply American democracy?

Prof. Welsh: *The democracies must necessarily be different: Americans are inclined to take their privileges in a democratic society for granted. Many Americans don't vote, they don't feel this responsibility for their society, I suspect that Austrians take their democratic rights more seriously. He adds that Austrian students, I find, much more expect me to tell them what to do. American students want freer rein.*

Dr. Draxlbauer points out that *the Austrian constitution is a much later document than the American and has for more than two hundred years been defined after the American model. From our perspective, the USA was not a democratic country until 1870, when the 15th Amendment recognized the voting rights of Blacks, or until 1920, when the 19th Amendment gave the voting right to women, two years after the Austrian constitution. To understand these two different concepts of democracy one has to consider, as Dr. Draxlbauer explains that the main difference is that Austria is a federal republic, whereas the USA is a union of states which would rather compare to the European Union.*

The USA also looks back on a 'historical burden' of racial discrimination against African Americans or American Indians,

on phenomena such as the Ku Klux Klan or the Salem witch trials. According to Professor Mayer, *most Americans I know would pretend that that burden does not belong to them. The individuals do not see themselves as having participated in the oppression of Blacks. Their hands are clean, even if the nation's hands are not. Self-identification is lacking.*

In contrast to that, Mr. Mayer stresses the individual and personal dimension of Austria's National-Socialist past and of "coming to terms with the past". He paints a very different picture to that of *The Sound of Music*:

*"Vergangenheitsbewältigung" in Austria has a lot to do with looking at the skeleton in one's closet; it is an individual, highly specific issue. By 'skeleton in one's closet' I don't mean collective guilt, but everyone's personal inheritance. For instance, one of my grandfathers was an illegal Nazi by 1937 at the latest. That puts a certain burden on me, knowing that he made a lot of money during the war, not illegally, but by exploiting his abilities. He knew just where certain types of wood could be found in the Austrian Alps and as the war made great demands for that special timber, he made money of it. He adds that 'we should not say Austria, as a country has to do something like 'Vergangenheitsbewältigung' unless we do it with our own skeletons in our own closets. I think this is precisely what the Austrian politician Joerg Haider plays on; he can say that 'we Austrians' cannot do 'Vergangenheitsbewältigung' because he is not doing his own; he ignores his own personal past and its implications.*

The Austrian politician Joerg Haider has frequently been criticized nationally as well as internationally and even in US

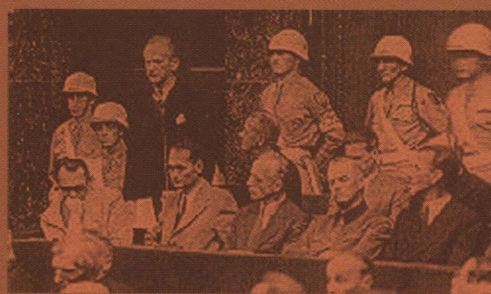
newspapers for questionable remarks about the Third Reich. Prof. Mayer, who was born in Carinthia, Joerg Haider's constituency, decided to change his domicile the same day as Joerg Haider won the local elections. Asked whether Haider was a more dangerous phenomenon in Austria than elsewhere, Mr. Mayer's comment was that *he is dangerous enough as he is here – period.*

Keith Welsh's *simple answer is that the American understanding of European reality is very simplistic, to the extent to which Americans still think of themselves as the winners of WWII, so anything that might look like National Socialism they regard as a 'manifest destiny' to extinguish.*

On the political level, the absoluteness of freedom of speech is an unquestioned ideal. On the cultural level, however, both Austrians and Americans live with taboos: Americans can be very provincial and conservative, prudish even. Austrians have laws to forbid former SS-officers the access to official positions – a measure that, according to Mr. Welsh, *would certainly go against the American spirit and the idea of individuals being allowed unlimited freedom.* We asked Mr. Draxlbauer what is behind these contradictions:

*The First Amendment (freedom of speech/ of the press) is central to an understanding of the American political identity. We may be surprised to see Ku Klux Klan or Aryan supremacist meetings on TV, but such phenomena are in accordance with the American Bill of Rights. Such political demonstrations would be illegal in Austria, due to the 'Verbotsgesetz'. The problem with freedom of speech being such a cherished right is that it opens a platform for*

After WWII, the Allies initiated a re-education program, the so-called de-Nazification-process. However, this did not really result in a policy of 'Vergangenheitsbewältigung', i.e. 'coming to terms with the past'. The mystification of Austria as the first victim of NAZI Germany (Austria was considered as such in the Moscow Treaty) was still common in the late 1980's and even now lingers in people's minds. 'Vergangenheitsbewältigung', i.e. 'coming to terms with the past' through a personal and public acknowledgement of Austria's negative role in WWII and its responsibility for war crimes is a late development.





political demagogues. Is Joerg Haider a 'Nazi' when he praises the employment policies in the Third Reich? Such political statements come out of Haider's socialization in the political culture of the NSDAP. His public discourse on National Socialism must be seen as a strategy that focuses primarily on the young, lower middle class protest voters, and not so much on the geriatric German-national block. Too many Austrians are still insensitive to the atrocities of Haider's language. In Dr. Draxlbauer's opinion, Haider's xenophobia-fest is hip.'

What about the reactions of the media? Mr. Draxlbauer: *The media in Austria, especially the nationalized radio and television have always been on pretty intimate terms with the various political parties. Therefore, the Austrian press and TV are still less critical of politicians' statements, whereas traditionally the US quality papers (not the tabloids) are independent. US media, however, is much more advanced than the Austrian in the creation of what is commonly known as hype. The Clinton-Lewinsky affair is a prime example of this kind of commercialization of news.*

Is the star cult, like infotainment, more pronounced in America than it is here? Would a Schwarzenegger success story have been possible in Austria the way it was in the USA?

Mr. Mayer terms Schwarzenegger's story an *old cliché of the bourgeois dishwasher-to-millionaire. He is one who made it, but you don't get the millions of others who did not. It is more than commercialization; it is exploitation, Hollywoodization. Moreover, he seems to prove that Hollywood myth is right. By the Hollywood myth I don't mean the big movies, but that all life is interpreted in the ways and means of a Hollywood movie.*

According to Mr. Draxlbauer, *Arnold's success story is a twofold one. The first is an Austrian one, i.e. his career as a body-builder. He was the Austrian Arnold who became Mr. Universe and won the title, I think, thirteen times. His second success story is a purely American*

*one, in that Hollywood with its image and hero-making industry turned Mr. Universe into the 'international star' of the 1990s. Also, he married into the Kennedy family, which helped his status. That Schwarzenegger, the so-called 'Styrian oak', has used his popularity and visibility to support charitable causes is, to my mind, is another American feature of his career.*

Keith Welsh agrees with Dr. Draxlbauer in that a Schwarzenegger-success-story would have been impossible in Austria because *the economy is not big enough. The film industry in the US relies on an enormous economy to support itself and on large audiences. One might talk about it in terms of a cultural economy.*

A state policy that sustains the film industry by subventions wouldn't be feasible in America?

Welsh: *No, because it's so commercial-driven. That is another social distinction: the Austrian government truly makes a commitment to the support of the arts: state opera, state theatre, and so forth. Unfortunately, we would never have things like that. There's a notion in the States that all of that is to be based on individual desires.*

What's more democratic: Austria's artificial support of cultural heritage, or America's commercialization of the arts?

Welsh: *That would depend on how one defines democracy. What I admire here is that the government is seen as the conservator of the national heritage, in art, music, literature, etc. We don't have that kind of ethos in the States. It would be the democracy of capitalism, but the problem with that is that it tends to sink to the lowest common denominator. There's a real frustration among artists of all kinds in the States because there is not strong support for the arts.*

The USA has always been a melting pot of different nations and cultures. Can this term be applied to Austria, too?

Mr. Draxlbauer draws attention to the fact that *Austria has had a long history of Habsburg imperialism. The*

*demographic makeup of Austria is therefore very different from that of the US, the classic immigration country of the last two hundred years. In addition to this, the settlement of the US territories and states has resulted in a pioneer mentality that permeates American social customs and the language. Austria is as much of a melting pot as the US, with a similar history of nativism, xenophobia and forced assimilation. Austria, however, does not have the aggressive American melting-pot ideology.*

Mr. Mayer: *Vienna in 1900 was not so different from New York in 1900. There were several hundred thousands Bohemians, Slovaks, Moravians, Hungarians, Jews who were forced, perhaps not by brute force, but by cultural force, to subsume under the system. I think the term "melting pot", especially for the time of the turn of the century was an ideological concept, nothing but "You Europeans who come here, you better assimilate!" It was basically WASP culture: White Anglo-Saxon-Protestant-Male-(Upper)Middle-Class.*

Mr. Welsh's impression is, however, that *Americans tend to homogenize things more: the McDonald's version of the world. Some of the states have tried to pass laws mandating English as the state language, and there is a kind of hostility to for example the large Spanish-speaking community. On the other hand, Mr. Welsh thinks that institutions such as Blue Danube Radio, a station run mostly in English by and for the international community of Vienna, are not conducive to integration, but tend to keep the English speaking population within their communities.*

Mr. Mayer, on the other hand, views Blue Danube Radio as *something positive because it supplies some forty thousand English-speaking internationals, and also opens the horizons of the Viennese towards English-speaking culture.*

The common assumption is that through a higher awareness of their past, Austrians should have more of a national ethos. Many Austrians see Hollywood-Americanism as cultural colonization. Is Americanization a threat for Europe?



Mayer: *It is a fact. There's no use in demonizing American culture. The question is how to face it. There is, of course, a tendency in America towards homogenization, but that is old. What the Europeans tend to ignore because they only see it in a watered-down version, is that at the same time that America tends towards a uniform culture, it also has a counter-development towards regional forms. For instance, the Pacific North-West is probably far more advanced than most European countries in terms of ecological awareness, of seeking harmonization with nature. We tend to regard this as something specifically European. American cultural colonization is as much a fact as European colonization.*

Mr. Welsh, however, states that *it is very sad to come here and see American words and signs all over the main streets. I am appalled at the way we McDonaldize the world.*

Asked about Austro-American historical intersections, Mr. Draxlbauer explains that *after WWII, American culture began to be the perceived global standard. But historically, Austria has had closer cultural links to the UK and a greater interest in British Studies. The re-education program after 1945 was run by British authorities. Incidentally, the first European chair in American Cultural Studies was founded in Berlin by Kaiser Wilhelm II, who learned in 1917 that his 'Feindstudieninstitut'*

*(Enemy Studies Institute) did not cover the US. Thus, American Studies were from the beginning tied to military confrontations. American Studies helped bring American values to Austria after WWII, under the slogans of 'our fighting faith' or 'the fighting democracy'. At the same time, this explains why American Studies have met some opposition over the years. Ironically, it is since the end of the Cold War and Pax Americana, or really since Vietnam, that Austrian students (and European in general) have become interested in American Studies as a paradigmatic field of multi-ethnic and multicultural discourse.*

Prof. Mayer adds that *there is one big study about Austria and America up to World War I called Die Antipoden, (The Opposites). Although it was written by a former secretary of education, it is a book full of hatred.*

In what way has that situation changed in more recent years?

Prof. Mayer: *I am not so sure if it has changed. One thing that strikes me in Austria is that whenever I am asked what I am doing, and I say I'm teaching American culture, what I get in reply is that America does not have any culture, 'they don't have any writers'. The Nobel-prizes in the 20th century tell a different story, although that may partly be due to America's political power. What about Americans who come to Vienna?*

As Prof. Mayer states, *when they come to Europe, Americans want to find their own projection of Europe, an extension of their own culture; they perceive it as a little older than America, a little more than a museum, a different kind of museum because it is not heritage, but disheritage, something that they have left behind, something quaint.*

For Mr. Welsh, *from an American perspective, Vienna offers students both a gateway into a large part of western history and a gateway into the very interesting parts of the world. I've been thinking a lot about St. Louis, which we call the gateway into the American West, and Vienna really is the gateway to the European East, so that there are some striking similarities. The wonderful thing is that there is so much to see because it has been a crossroads for so long. It's different enough still from London or some of the German cities. In Vienna, students have to confront that otherness.'*

So what is so Very Vienna?

Opera balls and rave parties, the jumble of festivals and the tranquility of everyday life, the old and new, the big and the small, the national and the international - all held together by both the myth and the reality of Vienna. For the Austrian and American, a culture with innumerable facets, a giant wheel of Viennese coffee and American coke.

AUSTRIA: German 'Österreich', republic in central Europe, somewhat larger than South Carolina: Austria is about 580 km (360 mi) long and has an area of 83,859 sq km (32,378 sq mi).

Vienna is the country's capital and largest city.

St. Stephen's cathedral, the city's landmark

(<http://www.club.innet.be/~phk/aboutme.htm>)

VIENNA was for many centuries the political and economic center of the Austrian Empire and the capital of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy between 1867 and 1918. After WWI Austria was greatly reduced in size and Vienna's importance declined. Heavily damaged in WWII, Vienna nevertheless regained considerable importance as a commercial center after the signing of the State Treaty in 1955, which guaranteed neutrality for Austria. Today the city dominates the economic and cultural life of Austria and contains about one-fifth of the country's population.





# Recent Changes Political

**P**olitics in Austria is usually not very interesting for the international media. October 3rd made a big difference. The country's National Council was elected; Joerg Haider's far-right FPÖ became the second strongest political party. This new situation has caused a lot of problems for the small central European country. There has not been so much international attention since the Waldheim-Crisis in 1986, and the task to build a government has never seemed so difficult in post-Second World War Austria. A lot of journalists from abroad but also in Austria were puzzled: How could it happen that a politician from the extreme right attracted about 27% of the Austrian voters? The country's economy is well-off, the standard of living is relatively high and the division of wealth comparatively equal.

It was stated that the central motivation to vote for Mr. Haider was not the wish for a better future but a criticism of the traditional. As over one million people cannot be put in one box, we need a more differentiated explanation that cannot be given here. Possible reasons might be a new form of greed, a decrease in solidarity, the disbanding of traditional political camps, individualisation and policies that lack ideology. The main source of the Freedom Party's success is so-called blue-collar workers. Their social status as well as their job perspectives tend toward zero; the investments in their qualification, human resources and education are low. Consequently, it is the blue-collar workers who have to fear changes in the working process most. They are the main losers of a globalizing economy. What

14 years ago, a man called Joerg Haider took over the leadership of a small party in Austria. What no one knew then, was that he should have a deep impact on Austria's political life.

by Ronald Schlesinger

Haider does, is to give some people who feel insecure about the future a supposedly new identity. He does this with a kind of entertainment-policy combined with attributes such as toughness, sport and unwillingness to compromise. The rise of Mr. Haider's Freedom Party changed the Austrian party-system from one with two and a half parties to one of three nearly equally strong parties and one small party. Never before has it been so difficult for a Federal President to form a government. This might be a little confusing for US-citizens, but in Austria we have a split executive, with a Federal President acting as chief of state and a Federal Chancellor acting as head of

government. Most of the executive power is in the hands of government, but the President is the one to choose the current Chancellor. The actual President Thomas Klestil is very interested in the country's stability, so he preferred a coalition between social democrats and conservatives. Additionally, a short-lived government would have been seen as his defeat, but Klestil's powers are limited and he finally had to accept the parties' decision.

+ LINKS + LINKS + LINKS + LINKS + LINKS + LINKS +

<http://webring.telnet.at/list.php3>

network of 176 homepages concerning the political situation in Austria and the protest against the government

[www-unix.oit.umass.edu/~sotckham/austria.html](http://www-unix.oit.umass.edu/~sotckham/austria.html)

private site with articles, useful information etc. about the situation in Austria

[www.reaustria.org](http://www.reaustria.org)  
[www.icare.to](http://www.icare.to)

international sites of activities against the Austrian government

[www.gegenschwarzblau.net](http://www.gegenschwarzblau.net)

documentation-site concerning about the resistance movement against the new government

Written February 2000.



## Two Statements

# on Austria's Landscape

With 27% after the elections of October 3rd 1999, the extreme right-wing Freedom Party of Austria (FPOE) became the second-strongest party. What is behind its success? Will its leader Joerg Haider rise to power?

by Sven Hilberth

**T**he rising of the FPOE didn't come out of the blue, but started with the takeover of the party-leadership by Joerg Haider in 1986. Step by step, Haider changed the policy of his party. From a former Nazi organization, a left-over Fascist group, it turned into the most successful organization of the new far right-groups in Europe by the addition of some liberal top-officials. Alongside this movement, a united right-extreme force has been on the rise in Austria since the middle of the 80ies. It has a full-size apparatus and a corresponding leadership-personality with political experience and financial power. The FPOE is not a Fascist party, but its ideology includes some crucial extreme right-wing beliefs - racism, police-state, anti-Trade-Union policy - skillfully coupled with very flexible populist phraseology. However, this alone does not explain the success of the FPOE.

## The government until now: social cuts and de-nationalization

Closely connected to the rising of the FPOE is the building of the so-called "Big coalition", made up of social democrats (SPOE) and conservatives (OEVF) in the year 1987. SPOE and OEVF have privatized the formerly state-owned industry; the unemployment doubled and two savings-programs (or rather: cuts-programs) have been passed. The shock these developments caused within the working class was deeper than elsewhere: In the 70s, Austria was seen, alongside Sweden, as a social democratic model-state. "Stability" was the main - and only - slogan the SPOE came out with in that election campaign. However, the SPOE stood for a kind of stability that does not exist any longer: at present, in the former social democratic model-state, up to one fifth of the population lives close to the poverty line - even though Austria is the seventh richest country in Europe! The policies of the present SPOE have nothing in common with those of the 70ies. The social democrats have been in power since

1970, and, together with their coalition partner OEVF, have achieved considerable success during their last years at the head of the government by the EU-joining campaign. It made Austria not only a member of the EU, but also with breathtaking speed, a part of the neoliberal development in Europe. But due to the necessity to fulfil economic and political criteria for the joining of the EU, a whole generation has experienced SPOE-policy only as social cuts.

## Social cuts without resistance

What is crucial is that all these changes were enforced without considerable resistance from below. The Trade-Union-Federation (OEGB) was and still is tied to the government policies and has sometimes participated actively in developing the cuts.

The absence of resistance is a consequence of the historically established system of proportional representation ("Proporz") and social-partnership. Proporz and social-partnership lead to the direct power-division and sharing between SPOE and OEVF, as well as to the involvement of the Trade Unions at all levels of society. The OEGB is and wants to be part of the state apparatus and for this purpose refrains from such methods as strikes and social resistance. Today, however, this strategy is in a deep crisis. More and more entrepreneurs want to decide independently of the SPOE and the Trade Unions. To them, the FPOE offers the possible elimination of the Trade-Union influence and the end of social-partnership. End of the SPOE as a so-called "workers' party"



The price for the turn of the SPOE was the loss of its traditional members and voter-basis, as well as the total disappearance of young members. Only 40 % of the workers and 25 % of those younger than 30 voted for the SPOE in 1999. Regarding both groups, the FPOE is the strongest party, with 45% of the workers (mainly male) and 35 % of the young population. These figures irrefutably reflect the long-postponed, but unavoidable end of the SPOE as the traditional workers' party. However, the FPOE can fill this vacuum only partly: The SPOE lost 230.000 voters to the FPOE in last year's elections, but 275.000 to the non-voters. Although the FPOE has won the majority of the votes from the working class, it has not succeeded at all in anchoring its political presence in the workers' movement itself: less than one percent of the shop-stewards profess their allegiance to the Freedom parties' trade union fraction. Also, on an organizational level, Haider could not benefit from the loss of members of the two big parties: with about 40.000 members, the FPOE is stagnant on the same level since the middle of the 80ies while the SPOE and OEVP have up to 400.000 members. The FPOE remains a protest-party whose strength stems mainly from one circumstance - having no considerable opponent so far.

## New government: racism and social cuts

After the last elections on October the 3rd, the FPOE became the second strongest party. The negotiations between the SPOE and the OEVP broke down because the OEVP wanted every possible concession. The Trade Union-wing (TU) in the SPOE became pressured by its rank-and-file and could not sign the treaty. It is quite obvious that the OEVP secretly held negotiations with the FPOE at that time but tried to find out how far the SPOE would go. After the negotiations had broken down, they very quickly formed a new government.

The OEVP has been losing votes for decades and has been lagging behind the SPOE since the 60ies as a 'junior' coalition partner. For them, the question of getting the chancellor-post was vital, and this could be the last time the party is going to have a chance to be influential. This combined with the personal ambition of the OEVP-chairman to become chancellor: this was the main reason for them to form a coalition with the FPOE, a party they have always

been criticized for its instability and unreliability.

After starting the negotiations with the FPOE, the OEVP dropped in the opinion polls. They were forced to form a government unless they wanted to face new elections, which could have ended in a disaster for the OEVP. Although they were given the chancellor-position, their only role at this moment is to publicly defend the FPOE.

President Klestil, who spoke out against the new government, nevertheless gave the oath of office to the new government.

## The protests and our experience

The protests started with the first demo on Wednesday the 2nd of February, organized by the so-called "democratic offensive" (a miscellany of "do gooders", artists etc.). Approx. 20.000 turned up after a 3 day mobilization campaign only via mail and telephone calls - no leaflets. The demo went on even after its official schedule. Since then there have been meetings every day. Although demos have to be registered with the police 24 hours beforehand, this is not being done at all. All meetings are "illegal". And thousands of people turn up, no one knows exactly how they receive information. The participants are mixed - women and men, youth and elderly people, workers and people dressed in expensive suits and furs, Austrians and immigrants. At the first demos we mainly went through the inner city, but then we started to go to other parts of Vienna as well. Some people stand at their doors and windows, applauding; waving red flags (or anything red) from their window, joining the demo. The group has grown up to some 3.000 to 7.000. The demos are militant but in general non-violent, although there were some clashes with the police. But in general the police have so far tried to avoid a full-scale intervention against the demonstrations.

After clashes with the police on Friday, a press and government-supported campaign was started against the "terrorist" and "anarchists", who are said to come from abroad to "disturb our peaceful Austria". This has effects on the population but also on the demonstrators, who often demand "peaceful demonstrations".

Not many police officers have been around during the last few days. The main role is to keep the traffic under control. There

have been some arrests and some threats ("we know you did this and we fine you for it") but this is not widespread.

The demo normally starts at 5.00 pm outside the presidential residence and the government building. The column grows as it marches along the streets and it is extremely lively and loud. The demonstration never stops before 11.30 pm. Not because some leaders want it to go on, but because the participants didn't want to stop.

On Sunday, the 6th of February a demo took place in one of the outskirts of Vienna, where the headquarters of the state broadcasting company is located. At 9.50 pm a weekly discussion program is broadcast, and this time the spokespersons of all the parties were invited. Usually, this is held in the center of Vienna - but because they knew that there would be protests, they changed locations. But a column of 5-8.000 went, nearly ran, 3 hours through the city to be there before the program ended. One of the problems is the media-boycott. The situation in Austria is totally different to the rest of the world, where the reports seem to be more on the protesters' side. If they report about the demos at all, they talk about very small sizes (saying some hundred instead of some thousand). State radio-programs were forbidden to announce demo dates. One journalist who is known to be critical of the FPOE and OEVP was fired "because of the new situation". Although a committee of different left-wing organizations started to organize the demos more professionally, the demos have a very spontaneous and self-running character.

## Conclusion

The complexity of the situation and its double-edged effects on Austrian politics and voters are still unclear. Not all Austrians are Nazis, not all voters of the FPOE are Nazis, but both the increase of social cuts and the new racist trend call for protest. And to build up independent media seems more necessary than ever!

For further developments visit our homepages ([www.univie.ac.at/publizistik/Kulturvermittlung/](http://www.univie.ac.at/publizistik/Kulturvermittlung/)), watch utv ([www.univie.ac.at/utv](http://www.univie.ac.at/utv) - quicktime4-movies).



# Morbid, Neurotic and Racist?

## An Attempt to describe the Austrian Mentality

by Alexandra Umfahrer

I'm Austrian and I love my country. Nevertheless some things go wrong and I will and have to criticize them. But it will be a loving criticism.

**S**omething more. To assign a general mentality to a nation can easily lead to prejudices and racism. Not all Austrians fit the characteristics imposed on them. Not all Germans are punctual and industrious, not all Hungarians are romantic and dreamy, not all Italians are open-minded and fiery. So, here are the austrian traits (in my opinion):

According to a study, the usual reaction after a suicide in L.A. is: „It's a shame about this person, he could have done a lot for him/herself and for us" – but in Vienna:" He's so lucky, he has left everything behind."

The Austrian toys with the idea of death and is intrigued by it because it is unavoidable and always present. It is not the belief in a great, better kingdom, as thought by the Church that is fascinating for us. Death is a permanent part of the Austrian soul. I want to stress that there's no direct connection to pain. It's rather a romantic, melancholy leaning, which should not be equated with being depressive. But Austria is after Hungary the country with the highest suicide rate and this shows that this romantic longing for the end is often carried out. It's no accident that Sigmund Freud found his "wish for death" in Vienna.

Erwin Ringel, a famous Austrian psychoanalyst describes Austria as a land of neuroses. In his important book "Die oesterreichische Seele" (The Austrian Soul) Ringel says that the reason for this tendency towards neurosis is due to the more than usual emphasis on obedience, politeness and thrift in our upbringing. As a consequence of this, we are forced to always appear relaxed, but also to conceal our negative aspects. Using

a metaphor of two rooms could be helpful. One is a visitor-room, where it's comfortable, clean and everything is ok. In the second room there are our negative attitudes, but this "bad" side is also a part of ourselves.

Of course, Austrians are not a population of Dr. Jekylls and Mr. Hydes. Nevertheless neuroses and there main symptom, ambivalence, are a fixed part of the austrian identity. Something important: A tendency to a characteristic, need not mean a pathological manifestation of it.

Now to the most difficult part for me: the racism. Is it wise to determine a whole country as racist furthermore, to determine a whole country as Haider-country. Why is not France lePen-country and Germany Schönhuber-country (both are racist politicians). It's horrible and I blame the political situation, but 70 % our population have not elected the FPÖ.

The picture the media presents to the world is wrong, exaggerated, and alienating. Yes, there's a reason to worry. 30 % of the austrians have elected a party that has hostile political intentions towards foreigners. It's hard but is it possible that this 30 % also represent an Austrian trait? And is Haider a product of this? To criticize my country as an Austrian women is hard, but on the basis of the political situation I have to do it.

Maybe my thoughts are right and Jörg Haider is a result of the Austrian mentality. I can't answer this question, but I think that all the people who did not vote for the FPÖ are a reason not to point out Austria as a Boo-country.



# Lost Neighborhood

A private initiative of some inhabitants of a small Viennese road to create an imitation of the facade of the synagogue that was there from 1903 till 1938 and to invite former Jewish inhabitants of their area to return to Vienna and share their memories.

by  
Elisabeth  
Hargassner

It's a beautiful, typically Viennese road. Most of the yellow Art Nouveau houses have little ornaments around the windows. "Neudeggasse" is a side road in the 8th district, small and unimportant but charming. Normally only the people who live here walk through, but today it is crowded. People stand in and around the white tent which houses the event, trying to warm themselves with hot drinks and looking up to the mighty symbol of lost cultural life. For a few weeks, the facade of the synagogue that was destroyed in the pogrom night of November 9th, 1938, can be seen again. The picture of the red brick building with two towers on the sides has been printed on tarpaulins and now reaches high over the surrounding buildings.

Seeing this picture evokes strange and strong feelings. Suddenly it all becomes so real. This building, which was destroyed, was a real building. The people, who belonged to this community, were real people. They might still be my neighbors, I would meet them in the street every day. Maybe some would be friends, if ... it had not happened. But seeing the



"We had a dog called Snob, and he was a Viennese celebrity. When Hitler came and everything changed, this good dog always piddled against the white stockings and short trousers of members of the "Hitlerjugend" (Hitler's Youth Organisation). That was enough for my father to be taken to the police and the dog to be killed. I think that was the first real grief of my life – that a dog had to be killed for political reasons."

Anne Kelemen, born in Vienna in 1925, now lives in New York, USA

"I do not know how to explain... the feeling of losing the foundation of one's life. You have your own identity and suddenly you do not exist anymore. You are fair game. Therefore, I would never accept an invitation to Vienna. I would not even accept a ticket for free."

Felix Friedenbach, born in Vienna in 1923, now lives in Buenos Aires, Argentina

"The temple was not very big but very majestic. You were filled with awe when entering the temple." Helly Morgenstern, born in Vienna in 1924, now lives in Buenos Aires, Argentina



recreated synagogue also reminds me of the still ongoing conflict between remembering and repressing the past, between understanding and denial in this city. The facade had to be divided and set up in front of the two neighboring houses because the inhabitants of the house, which is today standing where the synagogue used to be, did not allow the monument to be erected. So the installation had to be divided. The two halves of the facade are now connected with streamers onto which names of some of the former Jewish residents of the area have been written. You can see it as a symbol of the division of the Viennese when it comes to dealing with this subject. That was in October 1998.

The Beginning It had all started two years before. A little drawing of the synagogue caught the attention of a group of residents. They had not known that their road used to be a center of Jewish life and wanted to find out more about how it used to be. The project was born. They tried to contact Jewish emigrants, visited some of them and invited them to come to Vienna. They made 28 interviews to hear the life-stories of people now living in the USA, Israel, Argentina and Vienna. Some of the people they had contacted accepted the invitation, others did not want to return to Vienna.

A six-week cultural program took place in the "Neudeggasse" to make a glimpse of what was lost visible through readings, concerts, videos, scientific speeches and evenings with the visiting emigrants. It was about the big Jewish community that used to live there. About 15 percent of the district's population were Jewish in the early thirties. On the last evening there was a memorial service, on November 9th, the sixtieth anniversary of the destruction of the synagogue.

Anne Kelemen, one of the emigrants who visited Vienna to participate in the project, wrote to the organizers after her return to New York: "Talking about it was stirring, I needed many days to assimilate everything and to cope with my feelings. After settling down I realized why I had given this interview, although I had rejected similar invitations in the United States. I noticed the reason was that the

interview took place on the spot, i. e. in Vienna, and was included in a public program. I came back to the roots of my life, of my birth, my development and the final change in my life, my emigration. The memories of the people I lived with two generations ago are cruel, horrible and disgusting; the endeavor of these people has been redeeming and has opened up a new and humane Vienna to me."



"They all had to greet with 'Heil Hitler!'. The teacher entered the classroom and said 'Heil Hitler!'. And just one of the pupils could greet her because all the others were Jewish. That was really strange. Just one girl. It is always horrible to be the only one."

Adela Dora Kafka, born in Vienna in 1924, now lives in Buenos Aires, Argentina



Gerda Lederer, born in Vienna in 1926, now lives in New York, USA

"The hatred against Austria is so strong because the love of Austria is unlimited."



"You can take out somebody of Vienna but you cannot take Vienna out of somebody." Curtis L. Brown, born in Vienna in 1921, now lives in Wisconsin, USA

"The memories of that time are so horrible that I never want to awake them again although I appreciate the purpose and the good intention of the project." Helga Loeb, Birmingham, GB



About 520 years have passed between the first Shoah and the last time Jews were executed. The history of Jewish people in Vienna is a story of alternating toleration and expulsion. About 200.000 Jews lived in Vienna in the year 1938. Today their number has decreased to 10.000. Often, it seems incomprehensible how a Jew could live in a city like Vienna. However, for many Jews moving to this city was their only chance to escape from Communism.

They were refugees from Stalin's Eastern Europe – so Vienna does not mean the same for them as it did for the Jews who went through the Shoah here in Austria. Until the Holocaust, Austrian

countries – especially from the USA – concerning stolen Jewish property and inheritances are being directed at Austrian banks, parties and museums. During the Second World War stolen Jewish belongings were given to Austrian and German families and institutions. The former owners and their descendants want the stolen things back or compensation for them. This forces companies to face their history and take the necessary steps. The demands may have come too late. But up to now the Jewish people haven't gained enough self-confidence to insist on the fact that a lot of stolen property is still in foreign hands. This new self-assurance can also

Their monthly newspaper "Die Gemeinde" ("The Community") satisfies the political, social and cultural needs of the members and supports communication between them as they live spread out over the whole of Vienna. There are no special Jewish districts anymore. On the other hand, the Orthodox Jews prefer the quarters in the neighborhood of the synagogues so that they are able to reach them by foot, as it is the law on the Shabbat. The entrances of orthodox centers are anonymous and guarded by Vienna's police. But it is easy to recognise the orthodox Jews by their traditional outfit, so discriminatory comments are common. Since the elections in October life has not become much easier for them. The right wing party FPÖ with its frontman Jörg Haider has reached 27%. 10 times more threatening letters than usual have arrived at the "Israelitische Kultusgemeinde" since October.



## Where the Jordan-River Flows Into the Danube

by Verena Brandtner

culture was always influenced by Jewish culture – it was a symbiotic interaction between love and hate. Jews supported art, helped literature and philosophy to develop into new dimensions and turned Austria into to a well-known country of science. Austrian culture could not handle the isolation caused by the destruction of Jewish culture. It doesn't make sense to simply plaster over a hole in a wall – in the course of time cracks appear, plaster comes down and the old hole appears again. This has happened now.

Up to now Austrian companies refused to take a critical look at their past. But the young generation wants to bring an end to the past they only know from stories. Self-introspection has started. Charges from foreign

be seen in the "Israelitische Kultusgemeinde". For years they were a small and maybe too silent association, corresponding to the Jewish tradition of being discreet in a foreign country. Most of the members of the "Israelitische Kultusgemeinde" were born in Vienna after the Holocaust and represent a new self-confident community. Since the "Waldheim-Controversy" the "Kultusgemeinde" is a lot more active. For them it's no longer enough to be Jewish because of anti-semitism or because they were victims of the Nazis. They have their own identity.

But anti-semitism and xenophobia have existed before the FPÖ came into being. It's like the inside of Pandora's box. Because in Austria it's forbidden to reprocess the ideas of National Socialism. But Haider has opened the box, and, as a result, people are more offensive than before. The FPÖ - like all the other nationalist parties - produces an artificial enemy. So people are able to project their fears on the "foreign enemy". It takes advantage of xenophobic tendencies – but in comparison to, for example, France or Switzerland, Austria has a dangerous historical background.

Compared to the Turks or people from former Yugoslavia, Jews are just a very small minority in Austria. Incidentally, they are better organised and generally better integrated into all social strata than other minorities in Vienna.

The epigraph on the so-called "Jordanhaus" ("House of Jordan") at the "Judenplatz" ("Jewish Square"), house number 2: "In the Jordan-River where the body gets purified from all evil / also hidden sins are moving away / in the year 1421 vindictiveness raged through the city / to atone for the terrifying crimes of the Hebrew rats / once the world was purified by the flood / but now they paid their guilt through flames"



# Jeans, Kebab and Austria's Alienation

by Simon Hadler

**A** lot of people seem to suspect a loss of genuine Austrian cultural identity. But in a country where American pop-culture is more important than any tradition, what is it they want to defend? Thinking about the Austrian cultural identity one soon comes to the conclusion that there is no such thing. At least not in a one-dimensional, easily describable way. It's been long since traditional Austrian folklore, like wearing leather-trousers ("Lederhosen"), playing house-music (the old style), or handicraft were the most important forms of cultural expression. Still, the Austrian Freedom Party has attracted a lot of voters with its slogan "Stopp der Ueberfremdung" (Stop Austria's Over-Alienation) during the last parliamentary elections. Obviously, people are afraid of foreign cultural influences.

This is strange, if you look at Austria as it is today, as Terezija Stoisits, member of the Austrian National Congress and the Green Party's speaker for minority-rights points out: "Different language-groups have developed what we call the 'Austrian cultural identity'. A long process of cultural communication has been shaping our society ever since." Next to German there are five other languages officially mentioned in the Austrian Constitution: Croat, Slovene, Romanes, Hungarian, and Czech. Each of these groups added their cultural influences to the Austrian self. In addition to that, people from other countries make up 13 % of Austria's population. In Vienna even 18% of all the inhabitants are so-called foreigners, most of them being refugees or immigrants from ex-Yugoslavia and Turkey.

And it's they who pose a problem in the eyes of the right-wing-party FPÖ. Hilmar Kabas, chief of the party's Viennese section, especially blames the government for encouraging the immigrants not to assimilate:

"The official policy in Austria is going the

wrong direction in trying to tear down the walls between the cultures. They take as many foreigners as possible to our country and don't ask the Austrians if they want that. They just put minorities in front of them. That's not democratic. That's dictatorship!" He thinks that the biggest threat at the moment is the teaching of immigrant languages in Viennese primary schools. This is an exaggeration because in the school-book he mentions, there are just a few phrases taught in Serbo-Croat and Turkish, like "Hello, how are you?" and other basics.

## Hamburgers and American Pop-Music

The most common outfit is Jeans and a T-Shirt - not quite traditional, as Bernhard Fuchs, Professor for European Ethnology at the University of Vienna, explains: "Our culture is very much international. Jeans, Hamburger, Pizza and English-language pop-music are more important than genuine Austrian culture." And he is right: the most popular radio-station in Austria is Radio OE3, which is part of the Austrian Broadcasting Corporation and plays popular music from the USA and Great Britain most of the time. There's hardly ever Austrian music on air, not even Austrian pop-songs.

A good example for the internationalism of present Austrian culture is food. Fuchs already mentioned "trendy" habits like eating Pizza or going to MacDonalds. But including foreign food 'sneaking' into our kitchen. Austrian food has a long tradition, reaching way back to the times of the monarchy. Two of the most typical Austrian dishes are the Hungarian "Gulas" (goulash) or Czech "Palatschinken" (a kind of sweet pancakes). "And it's not just that we accept them next to our 'Wiener Schnitzel' and 'Apfelstrudel' - we are even very proud of them!", says Terezija Stoisits. Stoisits is sure that "soon, the Turkish Kebab and the Yugoslav

Cevapcici will contribute to our cultural identity as well". And whoever is looking for good and cheap food will also find thousands of Chinese Restaurants all over the country. Hilmar Kabas thinks that these recently "imported" dishes should not become part of the Austrian kitchen: "Here things are mixed that should be kept apart. The Gulas comes from Hungary, which was part of Austria. But Turkey and China have totally different cultures than ours! They are not part of Central Europe. We don't need a so called 'enrichment' of our cultural identity."

## Totalitarianism upheld by force

Bernhard Fuchs disagrees. He feels that any identity always has to be flexible. "A rigid identity means totalitarianism and can only be upheld by force, force against oneself and against others. Every identity has to be capable of dealing with extrinsic influences." According to Fuchs, the best proof of how interesting it can be to interact with strangers is our travel-habit. A lot of Austrians go to Turkey for their holidays, although many of them wouldn't want to have Turkish families as neighbours. Another important landmark in Austrian identity was religion. Our country was a strong bastion of Catholicism until the Second World War. Especially throughout the last 20 years there was also a severe decrease of churchgoers. Churches with only 10 people attending mass on a Sunday are common nowadays. In Vienna, Islam already is the second most popular religion after Catholicism. However if hardly anybody attends church and hardly anybody gives a damn about tradition (at least if no American or Japanese tourists are nearby), what is the problem, then? Bernhard Fuchs has the answer: "Our cultural identity really is in danger - if awful words like Ueberfremdung (Alienation) are getting about."



In February 1995, four Roma were killed when a plastic bomb exploded near the small town of Oberwart in Austria's easternmost province, Burgenland. The bombing is related to a series of racially motivated letter-bomb attacks in Austria, targeting members and representatives of minorities and immigrants. It is likely that Oberwart was selected as a target because right there Roma had started to fight everyday discrimination like job discrimination and bans on visiting pubs and discos. They founded the first Austrian Roma organization, quickly followed by the establishment of three other groups, two of

The term gypsy reflects the wrong belief that the Roma came from Egypt. Roma (sg. Rom/Romni) is the people's own name, which means human beings.

accommodation. As a consequence, many tried to flee their fate in the anonymity of larger towns, especially Vienna, hiding their identity from others and themselves. Little by little, the Lowara as well as the so-called Burgenland-Roma are retrieving self-respect and self-reliance as today's ethnic group of the Austrian Roma.

Actually the group not recognized by the state is three times larger than the one that is recognized as "autochthons". To claim this status one's family has to have lived in

as being Roma in the public anyway. To be Roma still brings too much prejudice.

Withholding their identity as well as the Roma of the Eastern European countries who are seeking admission to Austria on account of repression. When dealing with the authorities, it is often a disadvantage to be Roma.

"Migrants ask me to help them as members of the same ethnic community, but I am not able to help because they are citizens of other national states.", Sarkoezi reports. "It is necessary that all countries recognize Roma as an ethnic group and guarantee them equal rights."

## To Be Or Not To Be

them in Vienna. In 1993 they had their first substantial success: recognition as an ethnic group.

"Since then enormous changes have taken place. First of all we regained self-confidence.", says Rudolf Sarkoezi, chairman of Kulturverein Oesterreichischer Roma in Vienna. "No longer do we have to hide and make ourselves small, but we can hold our heads high." Besides the importance for the Roma's identity, recognition as an ethnic group implies state financial support for the maintenance of their culture. "The subsidies also help to improve the social situation of the Roma.", Sarkoezi explains, "Due to the prohibition of school

attendance during National Socialism and the habit of sending off Roma children to schools for mentally retarded until recent times the level of education is very low. We are trying to ensure that the next generations will find their place in Austrian society, of which we are a part like everybody else." In the 18th century, Empress Maria Theresia forced the Roma, who were mainly living in Burgenland by then, to become sedentary. About a hundred years later the semi-nomadic Lowara moved to Austria, passing the winters in Vienna and traveling through all the country for the rest of the year. Persecuted and drastically decimated in the course of National Socialism, the two groups' few survivors were again exposed to discrimination regarding work and

by Monika Maria Fischer

Austria for at least three generations or ninety years. "I consider it as unconstitutional to exclude Austrian citizens who are Roma from the group of Austrian Roma.", remarks Renata Erich of the Viennese Roma organization Romano Centro, which pleads especially for non-autochthons. "This rule does only make sense if there are massive

About 25.000 Roma call Austria their home. One quarter of them is recognized as the ethnic group Austrian Roma. The question arises who is granted to be Rom - and who dares to be.

linguistic differences between Austrian and migrant members of an ethnic group. In case of the Roma there are already two lingual variants within the recognized group and one of those variants is also spoken by the major part of the non-autochthonous Roma, the ones from former Yugoslavia." Since the end of World War II, Yugoslavian foreign workers, and among them many Roma, have come to Austria. Most of them stayed in Vienna. A large number of the children and grandchildren of those foreign workers has the Austrian citizenship. As if being Austrian and being Roma were not enough reason, they are not considered as part of the recognized ethnic group. Let alone that many of them do not declare themselves

Since this will take some time, Roma will continue to run from discrimination. And they will continue denying to be Roma - until something changes. The law has to change. But first of all the attitudes have to change.

"Many school classes visited our exhibition about professions of the Roma.", remembers Renata Erich. "The students were truly impressed. When she realized that, a girl who had always called herself Yugoslavian said

in front of all her classmates: 'I am also a Romni.'"

"We are often looked upon as exotics.", says Rudolf Sarkoezi. "At our yearly 'celebration of the Roma' in Vienna there were people who thought we

would light a camp fire right in the middle of the dance hall."

Change may come by leaving ancient stereotypes and third-hand ideas of one another behind, by viewing differences not as risks but as enrichments. Change may come as people see the basics that all share and allow each and every one to be who he or she is, as people meet one another as human beings. It seems as though this is too much to expect today. But as soon as this can be accomplished, the question will no longer remain - to be or not to be.



# The Streets of Vienna

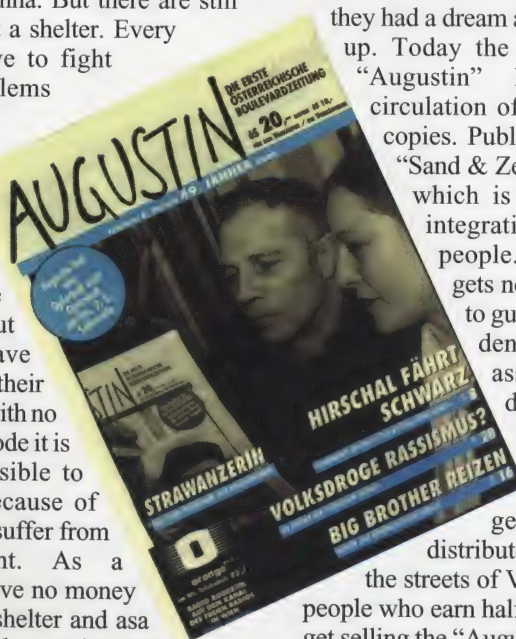
They are old, they are famous; they are beautiful and they are the home of some of the poorest.

No one knows exactly how many people are living on the streets of Vienna. The city councilor for social affairs estimates that the number of homeless persons is about 5.000. In fact, no more than 1.000 of them scrape a living somewhere outside on the streets. Compared to other metropolis this number is disappearingly small. The successful fight against poverty and homelessness is based on a promising project of reintegration of homeless people in Vienna. But there are still many without a shelter. Every day they have to fight with problems other people do not know of. Perhaps they are hungry and they are freezing - but they have certainly lost their sense in life: with no permanent abode it is nearly impossible to find a job. Because of that fact they suffer from unemployment. As a result, they have no money to pay for a shelter and as a result of that they end on the streets of Vienna. A vicious circle... Four years ago a group of homeless people and social workers had the idea to found a magazine for and by fellow sufferers. There was a lot of bureaucracy to overcome, much money to raise - but

Text: Ursula E. Gamaul  
Pictures: Markus O. Grohs



<http://www.augustin.bus.at>



they had a dream and they didn't give up. Today the newspaper called "Augustin" has a monthly circulation of 50.000 to 60.000 copies. Publisher and owner is "Sand & Zeit" (sand and time) which is a society for the integration of homeless people. The "Augustin" gets no subsidies in order to guarantee its independence. Of course, the association accepts donations from fans and readers because they need all help they can get. The paper is distributed exclusively on the streets of Vienna by homeless people who earn half of the money they get selling the "Augustin". It is essential for them to do something useful, to feel that their life is not senseless. Sometimes working for the "Augustin" is the last way out of the streetlife-nightmare. At best, this job consisting of selling and writing is the basis for starting a new and

"normal" life.

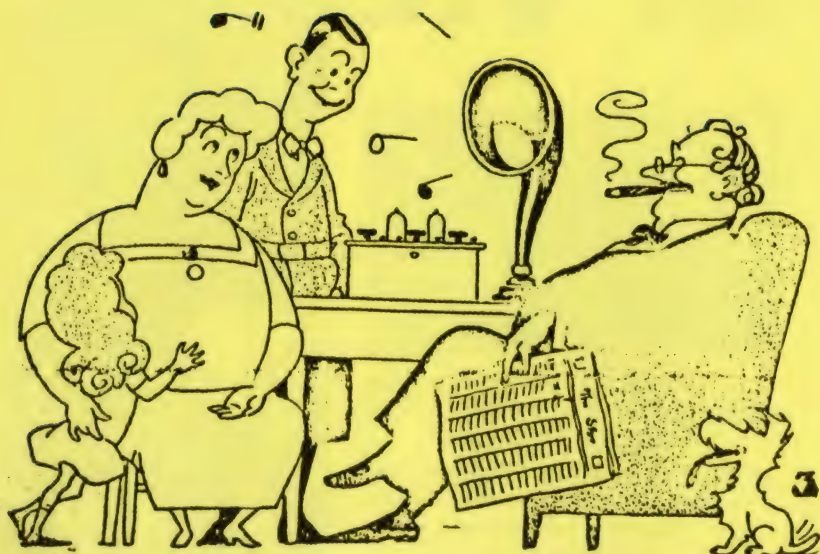
It has been a long and stony way, but today it seems that the project "Augustin" has succeeded. The "Sand & Zeit"-association arranges a lot of events to promote the homeless' reintegration into society. For example, every year, simultaneously to Vienna's famous Opera Ball, a popular counter-event called "Opferball" (victim ball), organized by the "Augustin", takes place. Throughout the year many concerts and exhibitions are arranged by and for streetpeople. Another example is "Radio Augustin", a program produced by homeless people, broadcast every Monday and Friday on "radio orange", a free radio station in Vienna.

As you can see, working for a good cause can have extraordinary results. Finding yourself on the street, desperate and homeless must not be the end. Some people living on the streets of Vienna had a dream and it became reality!



# You Only Have

# to Listen...



pict. by ORF

It was on 1 April 1998, when the first privately founded radio stations in Austria were going on air. And this was no April-fool hoax! Almost two years later, the market leader is still called 'ORF', the private competitors are still on air, but they all struggle with less audience and less money. A critical inspection.

by Michaela Fleck

What is radio? Radio is some-one speaking and somebody else listening. Do you agree? In fact, radio is more. Radio is one of the quickest means of communication: via radio one can broadcast the news as soon as it is reported. In addition, one can react immediately. You just have to stop the song you are playing and any kind of news is on air. Radio is also one of the most widespread media. You can receive it nearly everywhere. While having breakfast, in the shower, in the car, in the office, while doing your shopping, in short, everywhere. That is

why radio survives in spite of the TV-phenomenon and why it is more popular than ever.

In Austria it has become even more interesting for radio-makers and radio-listeners since the privately founded and sponsored stations have been going on air. 51 radio stations started broadcasting throughout the Austrian territory on the 1st of April 1998. Approximately 6.4 million people, that is about 90 percent of the population, listen to radio programs on a daily basis. This is quite a high percentage, we think. Of these 6.4 million people 81 percent listen to the programs

of the still state-controlled and so called public station 'ORF'. ORF produces three programs, OE1, OE Regional or OE2, and OE3, which differ mainly in their contents.

OE1 is the intellectual radio station where much classical music is played and culture and art are presented throughout the country. The interesting point is that OE1, against all international trends, is still increasing in success. OE2 stands for the regionally transmitted programs, in Vienna for example it is called Radio Wien. OE2 offers information, entertainment and traditional Austrian



folk music. Finally OE3, with 2.9 million listeners daily, is the most popular and most successful radio station in the country. And the so called 'Hitradio' has gained even more listeners (and is certainly making more profit!) since the private competitors have gone on air.

In the region of Vienna, the struggle for listeners and money has been the toughest. Six new radio stations started their programs in April 1998 in competition with the ORF-programs.

A summary of the Viennese private radio stations follows. 88.6 calls itself 'Musiksender', and according to statistical surveys (called radio tests) it ranks second in the hierarchy of popularity after OE3. Its name indicates the frequency at which the station is broadcasting. 88.6 plays music almost all the time, the news are broadcast ten minutes before the striking of the hour, which is ten minutes earlier than at OE3. Austria's most popular newspaper, the 'Kronen Zeitung', is an important financial share-holder of 88.6.

Antenne Wien is another privately sponsored radio station transmitting within the area of Vienna. Before April 1998 there existed one station similar to Antenne Wien called Antenne Steiermark, which was allowed to broadcast due to a special permit. Within its broadcasting region Antenne Steiermark was more successful than OE3. So the ORF had a

### Radio is, when someone speaks and another one listens...

chance to learn how to compete with private radio stations. Today it has surpassed all the Antenne programs throughout the country.

As opposed to radio RTL, which is dependent upon the big German TVstation RTL, Radio Energy represents a really free and independent radio station. Radio Energy broadcasts within Vienna at prime time for young and very young

listeners; it is a kind of trendy in-program. A small station for a small audience is Radio Stephansdom. It went on air much later than the other private stations, its name is closely linked to Vienna's biggest church in the first district. Radio Stephansdom transmits classical music and less spoken programs.

Radio Rpn is basically a Lower-Austrian radio station. The studio is located in St. Poelten, the capital of Lower Austria, but due to the large range of its transmitters Rpn can also be received in Vienna. It offers popular music, regional and national news and much entertainment.

And what will the future bring? I think some of the private radio stations will die out, some will just survive and others will still be able to compete with the ORF-programs. However, one thing is certain: the rise of private radio stations in Austria has led to a wider range of programs and a more varied choice for the listeners. As for the heated discussion about the theories of communication behind the programs,

you only have to listen...

## It Does Make a Difference

No advertising, no state control and nearly no rules: that is Radio ORANGE.

by Barbara Wimmer

Apart from the commercial private radio stations and the public ones, we have a third type: the uncommercial free radio. This type is similar to the American public radio, but it has something special: advertising is strictly banned, the access is universally granted.

What does that mean exactly? Let us express it in other words: The radio shows are never interrupted by nasty commercials, the audience is allowed to interfere and to take action. The principle

of free radios in Europe is that every human being has the right to express whatever he or she likes or dislikes. Radio ORANGE, the Vienna-based free radio station, stands for these principles and makes it possible for everyone to make their own radio show.

Nevertheless, the main interest are groups which are underrepresented in the rest of the media. Foreign languages, gender topics and uncommercial music are very welcome. At Radio ORANGE you can listen to interesting discussions, weird electronic music, talk radio sessions... There is a show for nearly everybody and the range is very wide.

And how is the whole system organized? The people who make the radio shows do not get paid anything for their

engagement, they produce all for free. Nevertheless, they are responsible for the content of their radio shows and there is nobody who intervenes - as long as the content is not sexist or fascist. There are only six people who get paid.

Due to the fact that advertising is strictly prohibited on Radio ORANGE, the money has to flow in from somewhere else. It is the radio listener who sponsors their station. There is a kind of membership payment on a free basis which means that nobody needs to pay for listening, but there is the possibility to help the radio to survive by making donations.

I guess you are totally confused now, not having expected something like that in Austria. But there are seven other free radio stations throughout the country!

<http://www.orange.or.at>



# MURMURINGS IN THE AUSTRIAN PRESS

The protest of some media critics against the paper-giant Krone and its "mother" Mediaprint seems to be hopeless.

by Christina Luef

It's evening in Vienna. Another working day is over. The streets are crowded, everyone wants to get home. This is the time of the "Kolporteur" (newsmen). "Krone, Kurier, ... evening paper, ... Krone...", mainly Arabian and African men are trying to sell papers, no matter if it's raining, snowing, or the wind is blowing. And the wind blows very often in Vienna.

But too often this is the only wind which is blowing. There is less wind in the Austrian press. The Neue Kronen Zeitung (new crown paper) dominates the news paper market. In relation to the inhabitants the Krone is the biggest paper in whole Europe. Every ninth Austrian buys this tabloid daily.

Since 1988 half of the Krone belongs to its founder Hans Dichand and the other half to the German paper WAZ (Westdeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung/ Westgerman General Paper). The second biggest paper in Vienna, the Kurier, is also partly owned by the WAZ.

Both papers are published and distributed by the German Mediaprint combine. Media critics think that the merger of these two daily papers is the main reason for the big concentration on the Austrian press market.

The government's

The smaller papers can hardly survive the underselling of the Mediaprint.

political efforts to preserve the variety of the Austrian press also seem to be a bad joke. The responses to the creation of the Mediaprint are a reformed trust right (prohibition of mergers like the Mediaprint in the future but not retroactive) and more financial support from the state for small papers. In fact the financial support is very important; without this fund 7 of the 17 daily papers would face bankruptcy. But state subventions is no long-term solution to eliminate the concentration of the press in Austria. The only real headwind comes from some media critics, but is insufficient to oppose the Mediaprint giant.

"Incidentally, I think the Mediaprint should be smashed..." For four years this provocative sentence has been published weekly by Armin Thurnher, Mediaprint critic and publisher of the alternative Viennese city-paper Falter.

But as long as politicians are scared of the omnipotence of the biggest Austrian paper, the Krone, nothing will be done in support the demands of its opponents.

Sometimes it even looks like the Krone makes more political decisions than the government. The referendum on joining the European Union in 1994 has



pic: Christina Luef

been marked by the pro-EU-campaign of the Krone. Without this support the result would probably have been less 'European'.

2,8 million people inform themselves by means of this tabloid. Quality papers like the Presse, the Standard and the Salzburger Nachrichten can only dream of such high circulation figures. The fight for ranges is hopeless without political tail wind, but it's not over yet.

A glimmer of hope is seen in the building of the new government this year. Maybe a new constellation will bring a wind of change to the actual situation of the Austrian press. But as long as the wind is not blowing, the "Kolporteur" will keep on calling, "Krone, Kurier, ... evening paper, ... Krone...".

"Incidentally,  
I think the  
Mediaprint  
should be  
smashed..."

Armin Thurnherr



# The ORF



## The Austrian Broadcasting Cooperation as a particular example for media policy

The Austrian Broadcasting Cooperation (ORF) can be seen as a speciality in the landscape of media in Europe. No other TV station finds oneself in a comparable monopoly. Beside Austria only one country in Europe, namely Albania, has one TV station.

The supremacy of the ORF is the result of the Austrian media policy. While in Germany privately owned TV stations exist since fifteen years, in Austria it was tabooed till the beginning of the year 2000. Only in January this year the first Austrian privately owned TV station could start with its program. It must be mentioned that it can only be consumed in households which have cable TV.

Of course Austria cannot be compared with Germany where about fifteen privately owned TV stations exist. But that's not the point. In Austria not even the political and juridical conditions were created to make privately owned

broadcasting stations possible. Criticism should be pointed towards the particular governments ruling during the last fifteen years which did not even make a single attempt to liberalise the system. Especially the design of the ORF program could be considered critically. First the Austrian Broadcasting Cooperation makes full use of its rights, of which it benefits as a TV station under public law. (e.g. the levy of radio/television licenses). On the other hand it prefers to look only after the duties of a privately owned station. This fact could be proved by the high-quality information program "Pressestunde". Public figures of culture, politics,

economy, sciences and church are invited to discuss actual issues with representatives of leading newspapers and magazines.

Because this program has not reached the market shares during the last months, the director general of the Austrian TV station questioned the continuation of the whole program as such.

It's beginning to show that the unconscious fight for viewing figures of the ORF results in the reduction of qualitatively high programs and features. Increasingly the attempt is made to lower the quality of the information service.

The present situation of the landscape of Austrian media is very unsatisfactory and some urgent steps towards liberalisation seem absolutely necessary although the position of the ORF as a broadcasting station under public law should not be undermined. The attempt of media policy to unify a privately owned TV station and a station under public law within the ORF pitifully failed.



# Helmut and the Herminator

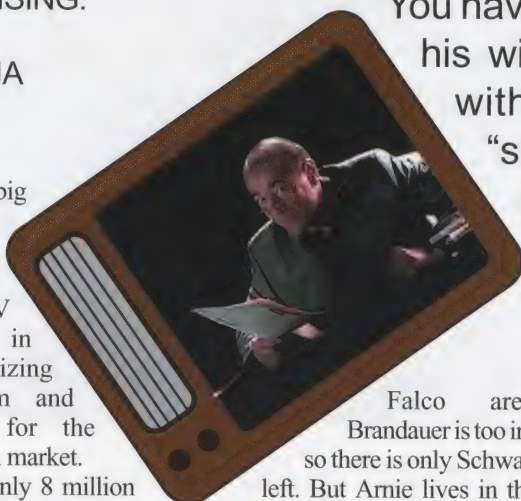


ALPINE ADVERTISING:  
TV-SPOTS  
MADE IN AUSTRIA

In the shadow of the big brother Germany and its over-whelming advertising influence thrives a little plant: TV commercials made in Austria. That's advertizing with Austrian charm and Austrian celebrities for the relatively small Austrian market. This is a market with only 8 million inhabitants, an underdeveloped private TV sector, an almost omnipotent public broadcasting corporation (ORF) and high costs for running spots. In such an environment the typical Austrian TV commercial can only survive in a small niche. The majority of TV spots was internationalized long ago and adapted to the European cultural society.

For the home market advertizing strategists draw on a little pool of celebrities from sport, culture and politics who are often practically unknown outside Austria, but even more famous in the Alpine republic than Michael Jordan in the U.S.

The good thing about the Austrian VIP scene is its transparency. The nation has only a handful of absolute favorites and they are already old friends. There is no TV evening without Vienna's ex-mayor Helmut Zilk and ex-racer Niki Lauda or ski-racer Hermann Maier and the Resetarits clan (Karin, Peter, Lukas and Kurt, also known as Dr. Kurt Ostbahn). International superstars from Austria are hard to come by: Romy Schneider and



Falco are dead, Brandauer is too intellectual, so there is only Schwarzenegger left. But Arnie lives in the U.S., is expensive and appears only seldom in Austrian spots. But if, then, the Terminator acts in a statesmanlike and sometimes funny manner, e.g. as a conductor of the Austrian Federal Railway or a good uncle who warns the children with his Styrian accent: do a lot of sport and take no drugs!

Advertizing spots based on a reliable pattern (an ex-beauty queen in a commercial for a car dealer) can be found just as bizarre and festival-like productions. There are no limits: an actor from the Viennese Burgtheater sells beer, a cabaret artist sells the latest drill, a rock musician promotes an internet provider, an ex-racer and a crooner praise the service of telephone companies and a senior politician who has had a long and honorable career is presented by his wife with a receiver for a pay TV channel.

You have never heard of Helmut Zilk and his wife Daggi? You are not familiar with Dr. Kurt Ostbahn and the "selfman"? Even the "Herminator" doesn't ring any bell? Then it's time for a journey through Austria's commercial TV.

by Otto Fritsch

In skiing the little Alpine republic is an absolute superpower and the media circus is enormous. Who jumps into the icy steep slope at more than 80mph and mercilessly shakes off his competitors becomes a national hero. This is the case of the trained bricklayer Hermann Maier, who was nicknamed "Herminator" after a spectacular fall and now advertizes chocolate made of alpine milk in a primetime commercial. Ex-Formula 1 Champion Niki Lauda has been in the business for quite some time and stands for technological competence. He particularly advertises himself and his airline, but also Italian cheese and Ferrari.

My personal favorite is still Andreas Steppan, a gifted singer of satirical songs and cabaret artist. In TV commercials he turns into an undaunted tool time king called the "Selfman", the alpine Tom Taylor.



pic: Kurier, A-online, Baumax



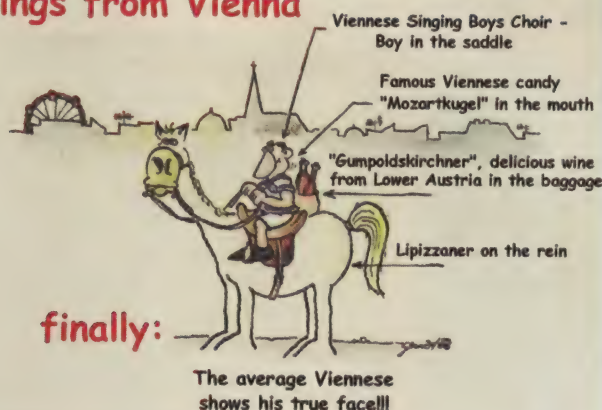
by Gabriela Paul

When I came to the USA for the first time, I met a girl on a Greyhound bus. We started talking. Within a few minutes I knew she was from New York and travelling to San Francisco to meet her friends. We spent many hours together and got to know each other quite well. I remember that one of her questions made me laugh out loud: "Your accent sounds German. Are you from Germany?"

# Austrian Versus

# German

## Greetings from Vienna



finally:

The average Viennese shows his true face!!

**M**y answer puzzled her: "No, I am from Austria. But my accent naturally sounds like German because in Austria and Germany people speak the same language!" At first she didn't understand. She asked: "But isn't that the same? Germany and Austria?" I said "no" and explained to her: Austria is south of Germany, but not a part of it. There are, of course, things we have got in common with Germany, but these are probably fewer than one might think. Firstly, there is the border between Germany and Austria because Austria is one of Germany's neighbor states. Moreover, Austria's and Germany's

Austrian knows and stresses that Germany and Austria are two different nations. That is why there will always be some disputes, for instance, when discussing whether Johann Wolfgang Goethe was German or Austrian, Beethoven was born here or there, Schuhmann was from Vienna or not. Clichés exist or are, at least, propagated to distinguish Austrians and Germans. Germans are said to be correct, tidy, fast-speaking people, traveling around the world with sun-burnt faces, big cameras around their neck, drinking a lot of beer and eating sausages. Austrians, on the other hand, are considered slow, and

history is closely linked; both countries look back on fateful events such as World War II. Before this war started, Austria was annexed by Germany. But since 1955, when our politicians signed a treaty, the "Staatsvertrag", Austria has been an independent state again. Today every German and

described as placing great importance in coziness, eating fat food like 'Schnitzel', drinking Austrian wine, riding on white horses called Lipizzaners and singing beautifully like the famous Viennese boy choir, the 'Saengerknaben'.

Clichés or not, Austrians value their specifically Austrian culture highly and stress their own achievements. We are proud of our history, the magnificent buildings built when Austria was still a monarchy, the world-famous musicians, our traditions and customs. And we are proud of our language. Yes, you are right, it is the same language like in Germany; but just as there are differences between British English and American, there are also differences between Austrian and German German. Not only the pronunciation of the words, the melody, pitch and stress as well as the speed of talking differ, there is also very different vocabulary in use. You probably would not believe it, but there really are dictionaries available for "Austrian" and you can buy Austrian-German dictionaries.

One of the words you'd find in those dictionaries is "Servus", which means "good bye" in Austria; in Germany, by contrast, you'd say "Tschuess". And saying "servus" I got off the bus at the next stop.



Missouri Tigers waltzing in Vienna – Turf and Jo Ann Martin, both graduates of the University of Missouri, Columbia, talk about their experience of living in Austria's capital. Although "schwarz-gold" (black and gold) were also the colours of the former Austrian monarchy and would thus perfectly match with the Tigers, traditions and lifestyles can be quite different.

# Living and Working in Vienna

## Hello Missouri - Vienna Calling

"Vienna? Oh Turf – this sounds wonderful!" Jo Ann Martin was quite exited when her husband broke the news about his new assignment in Europe. Turf prepared the ground before his wife and their 13 years old daughter Ashley came to join him. He found a house in Vienna's 18th district, an upper class residential area and enrolled his daughter at the International School. All this happened in 1995, and the Martin's, both graduates of the University of Missouri, meanwhile have acquired quite a good understanding about life in the capital of Austria.

Turf, who graduated in chemistry and biology, is working as International Business Manager for an international pharmaceutical company and enjoys both life and work. No "buts"? "Not really", says Turf, "if you adapt to the business



relatively small houses and small cars, but they spend a lot of time travelling, just enjoying their 5-week vacation. They will try to get their work done during their normal working time, i. e. 38 to 40 working hours per week. In the U.S. you have an official 2 weeks vacation, but only in theory you can take it as a whole. Usually you take portions and 3 weeks in one row remains a daydream for most Americans, who will

be entitled to 3 weeks vacation only after 5 or 10 working years. They also know that it is important to be the first in the office and the last one out. It seems that Austrians do not care that much about "keeping up with the Joneses" and this makes them more relaxed. Not only vacation policy, but also regulations about absence from work due to illness differ a lot. Whereas the system in the U.S. leaves a lot to be desired the Austrian safety net is quite comprehensive and at times also overloaded. If you have an appendectomy in the U.S. or U.K. your hospitalization time will hardly be more than 48 hours, but here they'll keep you for at least 10 days. But this may be part of the bureaucracy which governs life in Austria and still feeds 8 out of 10 graduates of the State Universities. No wonder that everything seems to move much slower than back home, especially if governmental bodies are involved. Whereas free enterprise in Austria is functioning along the lines of Western mentality, governmental organizations seem to work according to Eastern mentality. And private lives are affected by this overall governmental presence:

by Dagmar M. Bernardis

Picture by: Jo Ann Martin (priv)

culture here you get along well. Europeans prioritize differently. Whereas in the States we have big houses and big cars, people here tend to have





## Amadou Traor

age: 28 years

occupation: network specialist

country of origin: Burkina Faso

nationality: Burkina Faso

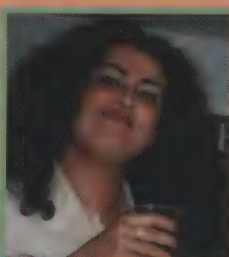
I have been living here in Vienna for two years. Before that I was in Lower Austria for six years, where I had been training for an

occupation within an Austrian program of development.

This program was a big help to manage all the bureaucracy in Austria. Not even a month later I found a good job, and I got a permanent right of residence.

Vienna is a beautiful city and I have already found a lot of friends here. The Viennese citizen are friendly, but a bit reserved and not really free from prejudices against foreigners. I think they are afraid of them.

I am not interested in politics here, but I am not scared of Haider and his FPÖ. Sometime I want to go back to Burkina Faso to support the development of my native country with my experiences.



## Marietta Gevorkian

age: 29 years

occupation: Logistic Manager

country of origin: Georgia (former Sowjetunion)

nationality: Austria (since December 1999)

In summer 1991 I came to Vienna for the holidays to see the West. I had been studying English and Literature in Georgia to become a teacher. But when I met my husband I stayed in Vienna.

In a couple of months I learned German and found a job. But it took lots of correspondence and eight months to get a work permit. In 2 years I changed my job and found out my wish was not very welcomed, though. I was told there was a non-written law in Austria: first the Austrians and then the others, therefore they were not happy at all that I got a better job than I had before.

Apart from that I like Vienna because of the security in the streets and I admire the Viennese "Wurschtigkeit" (indifference) to everything and everybody but themselves. I do not like people in Vienna complaining of loneliness and not willing to make a first step and their inability to entertain themselves.

About the political situation in Austria I just want to say that this "Haider" should not be underestimated. He is playing with the emotions and fears of the people and this is a dangerous game! I do not see my future in Vienna. The world is big enough and I need a challenge.

Text by Tina Luef

shopping hours which do not comply with consumers' needs, long queues for any official document you might need up to governmental control of salary increases. But things have been changing over the past 4 years..."

Jo Ann shares Turf's opinion, "because when we first arrived we could neither get Dr. Pepper's soda, nor Pringles, Riz crackers or Mexican food and salsa, but meanwhile these products are popping up even in local supermarkets. Just root beer has not yet arrived, but we try to manage without it." Jo Ann, who holds a diploma in nursing of the University of Missouri, organizes tours for newcomers and informs them about the many peculiarities of life in Vienna. One of her favourite stories is about behaviour: "It was in my first days here, I was taking the tram from our home located in the 18th district to go downtown. It was a bright and sunny summer day and I was all ready to discover Vienna, but after a short while in the tram I realized that people stared at me and when I tried to look at them they would turn away in disgrace. Nobody told me what was wrong with me and I felt utterly

uncomfortable. If only one of these decent, perfectly dressed ladies would have told me what I had done wrong and why they stared at me. I had bathed, brushed my teeth and combed my hair and there I was in my bright pink T-shirt, my shorts and tennis shoes ready for a nice walk through the city and something was definitely wrong with me. I went off the tram in despair. Only months later an Austrian friend told me that I was not to wear tennis shoes, shorts and most of all bright pink T-shirts in the 18th district if I did not want to stick out like a sore thumb, that I had to adapt to the standards and dress codes of my surroundings and this simply also included appropriate clothing".

Jo Ann has had her struggle with measurements, temperatures, weights and heights and is now familiar with both systems, she enjoys this old town, where life is more formal, dignified and where people simply impose their traditional way of doing things, "because this is the way we've always done it. And you can understand them if you think that 100 years for us is a very long time, whereas in Vienna it's just a blink of your eye".

## WORKING IN VIENNA : MAIN CONDITIONS FOR EMPLOYEES

- 38 – 40 working hours per week
- paid holiday of 24 to 30 days
- paid maternity leave: 8 weeks before etd and 8 weeks after delivery;  
leave of absence: up to 2 years after the child's birth, if leave is split between mother and father, or up to 18 months, if only one parent opts for the leave. A social security insurance allowance will be paid during this period of time
- paid special 1 week's holiday to look after a close relative in case of sickness
- social security system: comprehensive mandatory insurance coverage (health, accident, unemployment, pension)
- termination of employment: subject to a previously determined period of notice all contracts can be terminated (except for civil servants)
- family allowances
- social housing schemes
- health service: available to everyone



# Disorientation Through Unlimited Freedom?

The corridors of the Alma Mater Rudolphina, founded in 1365, are full of smoke. Posters and announcements are hanging on walls – the latest over a number of older layers of paper. Especially in the afternoon these corridors are busy with students. It's the oldest university in the German-speaking area: the University of Vienna.

by Ana Znidar  
interviews Gabriela Nimac

To study here may be a rewarding experience if one wishes to learn independence and patience. In Austria the admittance to university is not restricted, which means: there are **no study fees** to pay and everybody with a high school degree can study at this state institution. This is why the university became a **mass university** a long time ago.

"Free university" is an arguable term, because on one hand it realizes the basic ideal that science has to be accessible for everybody, but on the other hand the university is bursting at the seams and also losing in quality as there is sometimes little chance for personal contact between lecturers and students. Thomas K., 22, a visiting student from Belgium, was surprised by the „I am busy"-attitude of the professors at the University of Vienna: "Office hours at the Institute for Communication remind me of hospital waiting rooms. The doors are closed, the atmosphere is not communicative. The waiting time is a challenge on everybody's nerves as each professor has only one office hour a week."

The organization of this huge institution







is often problematic, which is especially obvious at the beginning of one's study when a certain **loss of orientation** is reported. Vesna P., from Belgrad, postgraduating in business in Vienna, says: "It's a great university, you have all the possibilities, the doors are wide open, the offer is astonishing, the problem is just the beginning – how to organize yourself, that is what you have to do – you have to organize yourself, and that is what most people are not prepared for, after high school."

Apart from the loss of orientation, there is the well-known feeling of **isolation**. Daniela K., who began the study of communication science and drama in the fall semester of 1999, expresses her feelings: "After you are thrown out of the familiar atmosphere of your high-school class-rooms, after you moved away from your native town to the city of Vienna to study here, you find yourself sitting in lecture halls among 700 other students – each time you come to the lecture you see different faces. Even the lecturer is

a tiny little figure far at the front. She or he doesn't care whether you are there or not."

This feeling of loneliness is further enforced by the fact that there is no such thing as a "campus life" in Vienna. Daniela says: "After the lecture everybody goes their own way, there is absolutely nothing that can bind us: no common dinning hall, no sport activities that everybody would participate in, no common room, ... So the effort you have to make to stay in touch with people you meet at lectures is a big one." The reason for this lack of feeling of belonging, is probably the lack of a spacial unity of the facilities of the university. The 190 Institutes are scattered over the whole of Vienna. Students are not only commuting between ca. 100 different study addresses during the day, but also to 1000 places where they return to at night. They, the 92.000 students of the University of Vienna, live in different student hostels, in their own flats or flats shared with other students, according to their financial situation.

Some even stay at home, wherever that may be, and commute every day. To continue living with one's parents is cheaper than on one's own, but this is still a decision only a few are taking. As it is not usual in Austria to receive credits or grants for one's study, many students find themselves in a situation which requires them **to take a job** while studying.

The university budget has also kept being cut during the last years while the number of students remained astronomically high. That is why even more **independent study work** is required from the students – this has its advantages, but can also be frustrating, especially at the beginning of one's study, when nobody will take you by the hand and tell you what to do. You have to find out by yourself. It may cost you your nerves if you are too late for important deadlines because nobody has told you that you needed one more document which is available at a place which is closed for the rest of the week. But soon students either completely give it up, or they find their way through organizational hurdles. The award for managing it is remarkable: **You can study what you want whenever you**

## Theresa, 20, studying Spanish and English

She lives in Tulln, a town lying northwest of Vienna. The train is her second home, the biggest difference being that there are no parents or unnerving siblings around (but lots of other weird creatures.)

7.00 a.m. She gets up, gets herself ready, arranges food for the whole day since money is in short supply, and hopes to catch the train... Gotcha!

9.00 a.m. She is attending a lecture.

10.30 a. m. – 1.00 p.m. Break (i.e. occupying a quiet corner somewhere to eat something)

1.00 p. m. Next lecture.

2.30 – 4.00 p.m. Break (no more food is left, coffee is needed - cheap coffee!, an amusing book serves as an escape into another, more relaxing, life)

4.00 p. m. Last lecture.

7.00 p. m. Arrival home. What a great day! But it's not over yet.

7.00 p. m. Her good-humored pupil arrives, and Theresa makes herself ready for the awfully interesting task of Spanish verb-formation.

9.00 p. m. TELEVISION!!! Good night!



want. There are no required dates, no conditions to fulfill to be able to continue studying. The freedom is nearly unlimited with regard to decisions about which courses you will take, whether you will attend the lectures or not, or when you will finish your study. You yourself put together your timetable completely individually – and this is the way to true independence, self-discipline and responsibility. “That’s the big advantage of the Austrian university system. Compared to it, all the others, the Slovenian, or the American, are similar to kindergardens rather than to universities,” says David M., a student of architecture from Slovenia.

The only objection he has about the university is one that can also be heard from many other students, namely that the study plan is filled with too much theory and that there is too little practical learning. His brother, Timotej M., a student of ecology, agrees: “Although we are truly not spoiled here, it can happen that a student has got a diploma, but is useless in real life, because his head is full of theory assimilated via frontal teaching, which does not really encourage self-confidence by interaction.” This is changing as each institute is making an effort to offer, parallel to the big theoretical lectures of the field, more chances for practical working in small groups.

The situation of the university, being as it is, the Viennese students have one advantage, namely that they have time. It’s not a cliché that students are spending it in cafeterias, with friends,... Students in Vienna rarely see studying as their highest aim. Many are studying parallel to doing something else: having a job, starting a career, doing sports, spending time on hobbies. This surprised Joe P., 21, who has come from Indiana, US, to Austria to study German for the summer semester 1999 at the University of Vienna.

**“The approach to the study itself is a totally different one here,”** Joe says. “An interesting thing that I have noticed here is the readiness for cooperation between students. When, for example, the teacher gives the test and leaves the room, for maybe several minutes,

## Martin, 21, studying Medicine

Lives in a student hostel. Normally he enjoys the family-like atmosphere with the other students and all the advantages this brings...sharing luck, problems – and the toilets of course! But these days things are different. He is really desperate. He has been studying for an exam for two months, and the noise and the everlasting parties are beginning to drive him crazy. Between 8.00 a. m. and 10.00 a.m. He gets up. Studies the whole day with occasional breaks (glucose, coffee, glucose...). There’s no need to go to a

lecture, since it is “just” this particular exam he’s got to pass.  
6.00 p. m. Locks himself in his room, since the noise is going to get worse.  
9.00 p. m. Nearly all the mates, friends etc. have arrived – no, not to relax, but to get themselves ready for a night out (as usual!)  
10.00 p. m. Most of the students are away – the others are making some awful noise in the corridor, i.e. they are enjoying one of their famous “Gangparties”.  
11.00 p. m. Definitely time for bed



immediately the students start asking each other questions. “What did you get for this one?” etc. While, in the US, this does not happen, at least not from my experience.” Joe explains why it wouldn’t happen: “First of all you wanna be the best person in the class and telling everybody the answers wouldn’t help you to do that. But here everybody just tells each other the answer. That has to do with a lack of competition.”

The atmosphere in Vienna seems to be more relaxed, less competitive than it is

in the U.S. Gottschlich, a professor at the University of Vienna, puts it this way: “Here students consider the study more as something they do for themselves, and take time for. Studying in Vienna is still what it should be: to study means to read, to talk and to think about it, and to do this a lot of **leisure time** is needed.” He emphasizes how students should be grateful for such a kind of studying since Austria is one of the rare countries which can still afford it. “If, as it is the case at universities with higher fees, everything is doomed to be



as effective as possible, this leisure time, necessary for a thinking mind, gets lost in the system."

"The studying years are considered to be the most wonderful years in life. One should enjoy them," says Dominic, who is studying law. He began his study and his independent life a year ago. **Enjoying** the studying years seems to be the motto. In agreement with him, many students talk of a more intensive life while studying: more friends, more freedom, more fun. The students' nightlife is reported to be very lively in Vienna. During the whole academic year parties are organized on every imaginable occasion. It's a sudden independence that most students are experiencing and

enjoying: moving away from home to live on one's own, where there is no control over coming and going, over attending lectures or not, etc.

Students argue that this time of the life is not only important with regard to specializing for one's future career, but also in terms of personal development, of gaining social contacts. "That is why sitting in the library is not everything," says Gina R, who has come from Spain to continue her study of biology in Vienna. Joe sees this differently: "If I wanna go to school and pay a huge amount of money, I am going to go to every class, I'm gonna work really hard, because I am paying so much. There is some drive ... motivation..."

It's true, the drive of Viennese students, is a different one. As they have so much freedom to organize their timetables, as they are totally selfdependent, it is sometimes harder to find motivation to work hard. But with time the advantages of this system are visible: students learn to motivate themselves and to be disciplined although there is no pressure from outside. "The results that are achieved this way can be considered true successes and are a sign of maturity. Students are developing personally while studying in such a system," claims David M., who will soon be successfully finishing his study of architecture.

## Birgit, 24, studying Communication Science and English

Birgit belongs to the group of people who have their own apartment. But as nothing is guaranteed, she faces some existential problems now. That is to say her brain cells have to work hard in order to find a new apartment. Her landlord got divorced some time ago and is planning to come back to Vienna. Bad luck for Birgit!

6.30 a. m. She gets up.

8.00 – 12.00 a. m. She is working in a Viennese hotel - occasional breaks are used to thoroughly inspect all newspapers and magazines.

1.30 p. m. Lecture.

3.00 p. m. The most interesting part of her day begins – which means that she looks at all the tiny and monstrous pieces of paper hanging down the walls of the university halls. You have to be awfully quick in order to be among the first 20 who're interested in a CHEAP

apartment.

4.30 p. m. After some unnerving and time-consuming telephone calls one of Birgit's nightmare visions comes true: unconsciously she leaves the main building and heads towards the law department, because there might also be information about the hiring of apartments. Birgit is dressed quite normally, at least for me. But dress codes at the law department follow their own rules. Law students seem to want to look like lawyers, not just to be lawyers. A colorful bag or unusual hair color could really get people's attention! Some people like that, but others may feel REALLY uncomfortable.

6.00 p. m. After her first real meal Birgit wanders home.

9.00 p. m. While watching a love story, Birgit desperately hopes her landlord will become reconciled with his wife.





# POETRY SLAMS IN VIENNA

## THE FIGHT WITH WORDS

### - OR BETTER; THE SIMPLE WAY TO MEDIATE LITERATURE

**S**ince 1999 poetry slams poetry slams can be found in Vienna, too. Originally this sort of event (and it is really an event) started in Chicago. From there it spread out, also to Europe: Berlin and Hamburg made it popular, and Vienna followed.

I have been to some Hip-Hop slams, but never to poetry slams. This kind of fighting (like boxers) with single letters, words and pieces of literature - but

you are grown up, you still write sometimes, but you are a coward and you cannot show your literature to your friends, presenting your work to the public is more comfortable to you. It's more anonymous; therefore you can feel safe, because the slam community is fair and open-hearted. When you are a little bit more in the poetry slam-business, you should bring your friends with you: They can be a big support when you are on stage.

The first time I attended a slam-event it was a really funny evening. It took place in the Schikaneder-Bufferet, which is one of the hot places these days in Vienna. When I was there, I didn't present my literary efforts, I was just part of the audience, but nevertheless I had the feeling that I was part of the cultural event. I think I had the chance to hear and get the feeling for literature in its pure form: you are sitting in a bar and there are 60 people around you and 15 people read their literary works on a small stage.

## LITERATURE

## EVENTS

nothing else - is challenging in many ways. Here, anyone can read home-made literature, it's not a big thing: you go to a bar, sign up and half an hour later you can read your poetry to the audience.

I know for sure that many people have written poems, at least at the age of 14-17, teenage poetry is something very personal and most of the time it's a kind of therapy for the juvenile author. When

By: Sabine Gebetsroither

gets nervous. But the next piece you hear is so well done that everyone focuses his attention on the lecture you can really feel the tension inside the bar.

You have a nice bar, a cosy atmosphere and there are creative (and sometimes not really creative) people around you, who share their ideas and work with you. It's an archaic form of a community experience, it's like it was in the past, you sit together (around the camp fire) around the stage and there is somebody who tells a story or a poem. This can be an intimate experience for your mind and sometimes really inspiring.

December 1999

## POETRY SLAM II

location: Cafe Stein  
Währingerstr. 6-8, 1090 Vienna  
www.droschl.com

organization: publishing firm  
>Literaturverlag Droschl<

assessment: jury, consisting of 6 experts from the media and publishing business and also people from the audience

prize: The winner gets a contract with the publishing firm and money from the city of Vienna.

motto: >Things which are written get read.<  
The publishing firm makes a preliminary selection, so they want to avoid hearing only texts about sex and violence. They want to have a certain level during the competition. The authors must send two pages to the firm in advance. Then 10 people can take part at the slam. The author has to read his own text and all text types are possible.

## POETRY SLAM I

location: Schikaneder-Bufferet  
Margaretenstr.22-24, 1040 Vienna  
www.monochrom.at/slam

organization: private  
assessment: no jury, applause of the audience - live

prize: money, which is collected during the event; drinks

motto: >The point is not the points, the point is poetry.<

Everyone can read his literature. Every text type is possible (poems, short stories...), but the person, who reads it must be the author. Teams are also possible. You are not allowed to read longer than 5 minutes. No props, only the microphone. The best three authors get into the so-called final round.



It is one of these typical cold, wet days in March for which Vienna is famous. It's around seven o'clock p.m., dark, rainy and cold - once again in this winter. I am late, like always and a friend of mine is already waiting for me. I will tell her that the underground was late - like always...

Hm. I still don't know, if I am in the mood for a literature reading at all (or should I say for two literature readings). I'm sure there will be colleagues of mine from university (all the philology students are going to this event) and for sure, they were here yesterday, too. The opening day is well-known for

popular authors and also for the catering. I hope I will find the hall, where the reading takes place. It's always tricky to find it, because the event >Literatur im März< takes place in the so-called Museumsquartier in Vienna's inner city. But they have been rebuilding it for years now - so to find something is like moving around in Sherwood Forest.

with lots of people. The author sits in front of the audience at a simple spartan wooden table, with a drink or glass of water and a microphone, nothing else. Sometimes the author has a low voice and I never know before if the literature, which will be read, will fit into my mood and emotional standing...

Will my concentration last for the next three hours? Maybe I should have stayed

glass of water in front of him... When he finishes after 70 minutes the audience claps, but not too much (It's an intellectual audience - you have to be aware that we will hear real >high< literature). During the break I start talking with my friend, but we're talking about university stuff and the H&M sale. Most of the people seem to have more elaborate conversations.

The second author is Austrian. The hall

## HOW VIENNESE CELEBRATE POETRY!?

at home in front of my computer writing my paper for the literature course or in front of my TV waiting til 10 p.m. when Jay Leno is on NBC (yes, you can watch NBC in Vienna). But now I am on the way to getting a high-literature impact. I know the audience will be dressed in black - maybe some people think being dressed in black will make them look more intellectual; for me also grey or dark blue gives the same impression. So, I am already in the hall where the reading will take place.

There's a friend of mine and she has reserved a seat for me. And I am not too late. I put my jacket under the seat (another typical thing at such readings is that they have no cloakrooms - maybe so it will look more progressive you never know)...

The author starts to read. It's Louis Begley - his new novel is about his childhood as a Jew during the Nazi regime in Poland. The microphone is badly tuned, but he is a nice guy. The story is pretty fascinating, but it's so silent, maybe a little bit too much. But after five minutes I am really into the story - yet then he starts nipping at his

is dark and the microphone is still in bad condition. The text is really hard to understand: a lot of overloaded sentences, and it is confusing. I think she is a good author, but maybe she should have chosen another passage. When you just listen to the words (without reading on your own) it must have some special qualities. Maybe not too long; often a storyline makes it easier compared to a fragmented piece which consists of separate blocks; texts which are too language-orientated are often hard to understand.

### PURE LITERATURE

I really like to hear something with emotions. When the audience can laugh - suddenly the whole ambience of the event can change into a cosy atmosphere. Or you can cry, because of the sadness literature can create. At these moments I know exactly why I am going to such events like >Literatur im März< and why Jay Leno is forgotten. It is because of the tension a literary piece can cause - every part of your mind focuses on the voice of the author, and then you and your mind are into the text, you are in another world.

For this experience you don't have to be a so-called intellectual, you just have to be a feeling person.

### LITERATUR IM MÄRZ (LITERATURE IN MARCH)

location: Museumsquartier, Museumsplatz 1, 1070 Vienna  
www.alte-schmiede.at

organization: Literarisches Quartier/Alte Schmiede

financing: city of Vienna and Kunstverein Wien

motto: March 2000 >Transcendancy<

This event is every March and lasts for 4 days. Famous authors (also international) are invited. The event gives a survey about contemporary literature. The schedule is a mixture of everything: literature readings, music concerts and avantgarde films.

I always have the same kind of feelings when I am on the way to >Literatur im März<. I am fond of literature and its production and the artists around (and there is a kind of professional interest because of my philology studies, too), but on the other hand I hope that it won't be boring and I hope that I am not too tired for this - it is not that easy to listen to one person's voice, in a big dark room,









photos by Markus O. Grohs with special thanks to Christine and the urbans of Vienna



# "Cinemarevolt Beyond Hollywood"

by Ana Jakil

Screenplay adapted from a real-life story

## The Vienna Film Academy

An Austrian who wants to make his career in the movie business can do so in a conventional way by trying to pass the exams of the only State Film Academy in Vienna. The academy is a luxury that the Austrian State allows itself, sponsoring only ten cinema films and ten big tv-film productions a year. That is why in more than forty years less than 300 students actually graduated from the academy in the areas of direction, camera, cut, production and scriptwriting. The good thing about such a varied course timetable are the small classes and seminars, which make very close personal contact between students and professors possible. And, according to one of the students of the Academy, that was one of the main driving forces behind the development of the so

because of its old-fashioned and rigid system). Students organized it themselves, determined to attract the attention of producers, critics and the interested Austrian public. In no more than seven days they presented their films to the public: most of them were short films, due to the low budget, but the spectators came in great numbers and the new film style was a great success.

The vivid, advanced, fragmented, often autobiographical, 'real narrative' films by students of the Viennese Academy clearly stood out against the international competition at the festival. The quality of a thorough professionalism and even perfectionism combined with a high-standard content - a mixture that the international public of the festival found very convincing. The films, in which the

really much more than that: for the young, unknown film makers it was the entry ticket into the professional world of film.

## Gradual development: The positive echo

Since there are no previews in Austrian cinemas, the festivals are the only possibility for the young film makers to advertise their work. The Austrian student film was thus becoming a notion also on an international level by winning awards at international festivals. That piqued the interest of Austrian film promotion companies. The routine of self-promotion of films, of sending application forms to diverse film festivals, of designing the press material formerly all done by the students themselves was no longer absolutely necessary. Two of the biggest film promotion firms, the 'Austrian Film



"Inter-view" by Jessica Hausner: Reflective.



"Abuse is to be punished" by Ulrike Schweiger: Criticizing.

called Nouvelle Vague Viennoise. The name describes a special moviemaking-scene that developed within the Viennese Film Academy about four years ago and is well-known today both internationally and nationally through a new type of film that it has introduced to the public.

### Plotpoint 1:

#### The successful new film

It all started with a small student film festival organized four years ago by the Vienna Film Academy (commonly known until then as 'the reducer of talents'

students rely on the actual theme and their cultural identity and individuality rather than on elaborate film techniques, in which the artistic rather than the formal aspect plays the main part were subsequently invited to take part, in the biggest international film festivals. The short, understated films, shot 'on location', mostly with the hand camera, without any requisits, without big visual or acoustic action-brimboriums, started a new film movement, called 'Nouvelle Vague Viennose'. The invitations to the important international film festivals were

Comission' and 'Six Pack' took this burden off the shoulders of the best of the academy students. This meant that the best of the student film-makers were able to concentrate on film making itself. It also meant that the budget was somewhat higher, and that the Academy's productions increased in number and quality. The common story of bankrupt film students who had to finance their own productions was not becoming a story of the past, but with the academy covering the expenses for the technical equipment and some sponsoring from the big film



companies, a new kind of optimism arose among the students. Through international success it was much easier now for the would-be film producers to get the sponsoring for their films.

## Midpoint: The latest highlights of the Nouvelle Vague Viennoise

One of the most important consequences of this positive development was the courage and self-confidence that the

passers-by are shot casually on the streets of Vienna, and thus realize an intersection between a fictional and a documentary approach; both an interior and an exterior, objective view are possible. 'Inter-View' was awarded the special prize of the jury at the 1999 Cannes Festival.

Hausner's fellow student, Ruth Mader, also left a lasting impression with her latest short film 'Gfasta', a story about a few 12 year old girls living in a silo on the

Last but not least of the most successful representatives of the new generation of the 'Nouvelle Vague Viennoise' is a male director, Valentin Hitz. His latest short film 'Rat Race', shot in high-contrast, grainy black-and-white, is a creepy science fiction film utterly launched onto the viewer with black humor and technical ingenuity. That goes at least for one part of the narration, which depicts a high-tech extraction of a human organ that will give you the willies, David-Cronenberg-style.



"Gfasta" by Ruth Mader: Radical.



"Ratrace" by Valentin Hitz: Shocking.

younger students at the Film Academy gained. The success of the authentic, unconventional films of their older colleagues was an incentive for the younger generation of students. Today, a new generation of mostly female film makers is 'on the move'. Although they remained true to the main "stylistic devices of the new film's, en film", their increasingly successful films show that they learned from the mistakes and achievements of the 'founders' of the Nouvelle Vague Viennoise.

One of the outstanding figures of this new generation is Jessica Hausner. Her last 45 minute film 'Inter-view' is a story about a man and a woman who literally clash against each other at the end of the movie, after being the protagonists in an intense depiction of loneliness, sensuality and happiness. Ingeniously employing film spaces, dealing with narrative repetitions and duplications, music and, most importantly, focusing intensively on the actors, the film is entirely new without being inaccessible. Professional actors display their talents alongside amateurs: the main female part is played by a non-professional. The film has no dialogue in the conventional sense, but manages to transmit a feeling of anxiety, of uncertainty, of inner turmoil. The interviews a student-actor conducts with

outsiders of Vienna. In the film, the faces and poses of the girls, who are all in the phase of early puberty, are empty, apathetic, but also full of hatred and aggression. Their actions are humiliating power games, uttered in vulgar language, originating from the lack of a social framework. Mader depicts the figures almost statically on the concrete-wasteland-scape and almost pumps a threatening kinetic activity out of them. Her split staging technique of the depiction of social misery at the threshold of a polemic outcry won a 'Grand Prix' for the 'Meilleur Film d'Ecole Européen 1999' at the Student Film Festival 'Premiers Plans' in France.

Ulrike Schweiger is another female film author who, with 'Missbrauch wird bestraft' ('Abuse is going to be punished') won two very important prizes in 1999: a first prize 'Dacante de oro' at the 'Huesca International Film Festival' and the prize for the best short film at the 'International Short Film Festival' in Berlin. Her soul-stirring film about a rape on the subway, where people in the next carriage turned away not wanting to get mixed up in the affair was based on a newspaper-article she read one day. This plea for civil courage is censored in Austria and can only be shown abroad.

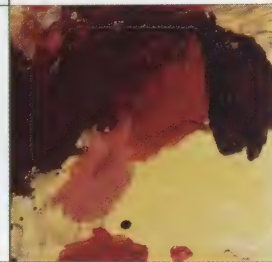
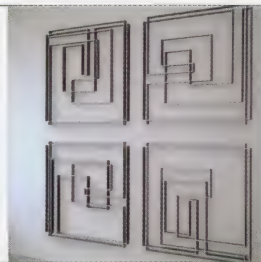
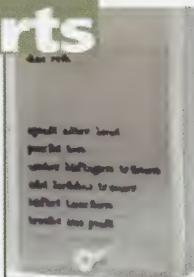
Set in post-apocalyptic Vienna, 'after the currency has broken down', the film follows the misadventures of a desperate fellow who smuggles organs across the border when he's not squandering huge sums at the rat-racing den. He is informed that he can pay off his debts by stealing human brains for the Doctor, a sinister underworld figure. With - or in spite of - its nightmarish love story made even more hallucinating by its treatment of themes of memory - eternal physical youth versus a new, implanted psychological past narrated in third-man-atmosphere by a relaxed Viennese voice-over - the film managed to convince the various juries. One of the most prestigious prizes that the 61 minute long film won was the 'Silver Spire Award 1999' at the renowned 'Golden Gate Festival' in San Francisco.

## Cliffhanger: Action-loaded Future

In the new summer semester, new ideas are taking shape at the Vienna Film Academy: new battles for sponsors and promoters are starting again. 30 new short films, documentary films, long films and experimental projects are going into production. It is a fact: the future is looking very promising.

to be continued





# Modern and Contemporary Austrian Art



text: by Hans-Peter Wipplinger  
pictures: Michael Rausch-Schott

Scope, Intentions and Influences at the Threshold between the Old and the New Millenium - Review and Outlook.

Artworks by:  
Eva Schlegel  
Alois Mitter  
Franz Pichler  
Anna Gerlitz  
Gelatin

At the beginning of the new millenium, a retrospective on the Austrian art of the last century and a glimpse at the contemporary art production of the new generation seem more appropriate than at any other time.

Two or three important developments in Austrian art history are internationally significant. Of primary importance were, in the early years of the last century, the world famous Austrian expressionists Egon Schiele, Gustav Klimt and Oskar Kokoschka; there followed - in the fifties and sixties - another internationally acclaimed art movement, a special kind of art performance by the so-called Viennese Actionists surrounding Hermann Nitsch, Guenther Brus or Otto Muehl. Like their predecessors, they focused on expressionistic modes; finally, the third movement in the eighties concerned a European generation of young and wild painters; let's call them the "new Fauvists", including Austrian protagonists like Schmalix, Anzinger, Klinkan or Bohatsch. Beside these trends, there is a field of high-tech media-based arts in Austria, which have apparently been more closely associated with local festivals (ars electronica Linz, for instance), than with autonomous developments in the arts.

However, the nostalgic, historical perspective may be less interesting than exploring the contemporary situation, the climate of art production, the influences, the cultural-political atmosphere and the issues of the works of contemporary Austrian artists.

These artists have experienced and themselves effected a great number of dramatic, often unexpected and contradictory changes. They were exposed to current political, cultural and sociological trends. Most of them have developed in the political and societal climate that resulted from the dramatic historical and political changes in Central and Eastern Europe in the late 80's and 90's (the opening of the borders, the fall of the Berlin-Wall, the war in Ex-Yugoslavia, etc.). This has disrupted the mood of comfortable security, stability and welfare. Among the present generation of artists one can make out a growing skepticism of Austria's traditional self-image. Artists also criticize what they see as Austria's refusal to actively participate in the global process of societal and political change. The way these Austrian artists view their own, particular position differs significantly from that of their various predecessors. The range of artistic

activity has become far wider, involving media developments as well as geopolitical phenomena. The expanded globalism of artistic communication is paralleled by a sensitive, intellectually reflected contextualization determined by local, actual, social, political as well as cerebral structures. Today, artists, like Austrians in general, operate in a transnational environment, carrying out their artistic interventions on different continents and in different cultures and integrating them in a wide range of contexts.

The new generation of artists - as "children" of a boundless communication culture - are at home everywhere and nowhere. They are travelers passing the threshold from the old into the new millennium - without descent, without intention, without destination, without God. The artist is the prototype of the yearning individual. Who else except the artist has this genuine need for freedom and deviation, for frontier-crossing, for breaking of conventions, for escaping the narrowness of our society and daily routine? The artist's search for new stimuli stands for the restlessness, for the departure towards ever new horizons, for taking delight in life again. The artist is the perfect embodiment of both desire



and inspiration for society and himself – the ideal of yearning. The spiritual departure of the artist becomes a parable of human development, his life becomes a voyage. If artists and cultures want to keep their liveliness, they have to cross borders; otherwise they are only relevant in a regional or national framework. Nowadays, there is an interesting osmosis between Austria and the outside world, a continuous interchange with discussions and cooperative projects taking place all over the world. Contemporary artists perceive themselves as participants in a multicultural information society within which they strive to preserve their integrity and critical license.

The art of the fifties and sixties (Viennese actionism) primarily dealt with abstract, universal principles unconnected to actual historical circumstances; the art of the seventies and eighties emphasized the artist's regional identity and nomadic approach and his role play against a basically historical background, thereby stressing the historical-cultural indebtedness. Inversely, the artist on the threshold of a new millennium views the area of responsibility for his actions in a far more skeptical and - at the same time - realistic light. Nowadays, the stress of the artistic regard increasingly focuses on a critical investigation of the mechanism of power and manipulation, on the mediatization of artistic activity, as well as on the critical analysis of cultural institutions. The current ease and non-commitment of the artist's attitude towards the distinction between 'high' and 'low' culture, his indifference towards the metropolis or entire continents, becomes evident in contemporary works. Artists investigate both the actual and virtual reality of life in our society, the sociological aspects of artistic activity as well as related issues as advertising, manipulation and the power of information. They develop a highly critical and skeptical awareness towards art institutions, but they use this institutional framework in their own subversive way, in disparate media and forms of expression.

The consciousness of the ironic contradiction in the acceptance of the avant garde into the museum

environment is also often picked out as a central theme of art production: the avant garde gave up the autonomy of the art work and divested the aura of aesthetic value, proposing instead the active participation of the observer in an educational process through art. Integrated into a museum, the avant garde was forced to separate and protect the work of art from the observers, to actively restrict their participation, because museums imply interest in preservation and, in this process, abandon the avant garde principle of replacing the artworks autonomy with a social "usefulness". Consequently, we are faced with the paradoxical situation in which the avant garde work of art, though its physical existence is being preserved in the museum, can no longer fulfil its original, aesthetic, cerebral and subversive function. This amounts to an attack on the functional and intellectual potential of these artworks.

Further aspects of art production, such as consideration of power and ethics, are reflected in the fact that the "scene" in itself is a heterogeneous, collective entity, representing a wide range of approaches and forms of self-portrayal.

Other relevant issues in contemporary art production are concepts like information, communication and interaction as well as the omnipresent strategies of growing mediatization. The enhanced ability of various media to produce a virtual, simulated and staged media version of actual societal space and of the world we live in encourages the accumulation of a manipulative potential, which constitutes the basis for diverse forms of artistic interpretation.

Another fact of some importance in Austrian art remains the topic of the body, especially the female body. The body is being used to transmit a large variety of messages. For women artists this means primarily reconsidering the female body, locating the position of the woman as an image and as the criticism of this image. The Austrian representatives of feminist art are, for example, Maria Lassnig, Valie Export or Elke Krystufek. Although they belong to three different generations, what these artists have in common with the action art of the sixties and seventies is their use of their bodies as a material

in the artistic process. The Viennese Activists had often used the female body in stage performances as a means to demonstrate the mastery and legitimization of the artist allowing him to present the skin and the body of women to the voyeuristic view of the audience. The persiflage of religious ritual was one point, but even more emphasis was laid on the self-creation of the artists in the exposition of the female or the exhibition of their own body. Insecurity with regard to body perception is to be seen partly in the context of the relatively new problem of media transportability of "reality", which has become more acute in the wake of computer technology, cyberspace and genetic technology.

In general, national boundaries are incapable of providing a meaningful framework for art these days. It is clear, moreover, that the more critical artists are suspicious of the art world's dependency on official cultural budgets, which all too frequently are limited to national application and serve only to boost works of art as export goods. The self-image of the state is the real bottom line. During the eighties, no one seemed to think it strange to put on a nationally-limited exhibition. Curators who wanted to avoid the term "national identity" preferred to speak of "developments in a geographic region" or of "dialects". But the idea of internationalism was an anathema to certain Europeans, who saw it as synonymous with American domination in the fine arts.

The cliché-loaded image of Austria with its Lipizzaner, Viennese boys' choir, classical music by Strauss or Mozart, still has exclusivity over Austria's cultural identity in the world. Obviously economical, or rather tourist-oriented strategies are responsible for this one-sided self-portrayal. The tourist-industry marketing managers clearly had a financially powerful tourist-client in mind and thought tourists would be easier to capture with romantic, nostalgic images of the heart of the old world, than through a postmodern representation of our country through the works of contemporary artists like Edgar Honetschlaeger, Muntean and Rosenblum or the Gelatin group.



**M.I.P.** m.i.p.- is not what you think. It is no printing error and shouldn't have meant „m.i.b.” –the film „Men in black” with Will Smith. However, there are some similarities. „m.i.p.”, too, has to do with screen heros, the future and new technologies. But in a different way. Well, let's not make a secret out of it! „m.i.p.” means: “museum in progress”. We have chosen two projects which we would now like to present to you. So OPEN YOUR MIND & EYES ! THE CURTAIN RISES NOW:

by Lisa-Maria Cerha, Johanna Jenner  
Jenner pics: Johanna Jenner

This museum is not a museum you can go to. This museum is coming to you. Everywhere in Vienna and also in other big cities you can discover it if you are open-eyed. It is a new kind of museum that doesn't have doors, walls and an entrance fee to pay. This museum presents art through the media and by new technologies like the Internet and infosccreens, which are placed in tube stations to give “quick” information inbetween in-and-out coming trains. But it is also used for common ways of communication like advertising columns and for projects which are presented in the public to the public. The fact that

artists will be competing on an equal footing with the political and social affairs of the day, includes the idea of a non-protected art in public space.

To describe this kind of phenomenon it would be better to start with the beginning of our excursion: On our way to the head office of this institution we had expected an eye-catchingly big and designed office, placed in a frequented location. When we arrived there, we had problems to discover it. Contrary to our expectations it was a small office, somewhere downstairs, hidden behind closed doors. So that was where the real protagonists of the Art Project are working. In some way it is ambiguous not to attract any attention as the big deals are made there.

It's like the theatre when the concept stands it's presented to the public. Nobody knows the person behind the closed curtains and the working process.- It represents also the relationship between Art & Artist.

The m.i.p. was founded in Vienna by Kathrin Messner and Josef Ortner. Since 1989 this institution has been working with artists from different fields such as film, literature and graphic design. Some of them are well-known like: Chris Burden, Valie Export, Nan Goldin, Damien Hirst, Hermann Nitsch, Yoko Ono and Arnulf Rainer.

[For some more details about them and their work, just visit the homepage: <http://www.mip.at/kuenstler/index.html>]







The "museum" has a flexible organisation aiming at integrating art into everyday life. To achieve this aim, it is necessary to work together with different partners, mainly with media-companies, which offer space for publicity, like the Austrian daily newspapers "Der Standard" and the weekly magazine "profil". The museum no longer finds its reason for being in fixed walls but rather in the process of precise placement and intervention in the media of posters, newspapers, magazines and television. Therefore artists are brought directly into

the aesthetic debate of their time and of course their work in its time finds immediate and direct reception by people in the streets.

The photo on the top of the page shows Markus Schinwald's latest idea. This billboard of huge dimensions truly puzzles people. What can YOU see? A stage with an isolated figure on it? If it wants to represent the culture of theater, its theme sounds probably more interesting than it really is; if it represents art, it might be interpreted as reality and

reality on the stage visualized. The aesthetic, thus, isolates in a way; the contents is missing. The starting point is a simple story, a play or a film in which everything which has to do with the plot is cut out. Only the moments in between can be seen. So how would I react if not by filling the emptiness myself with a plot, a content or my thoughts. So why not be the actor yourself!

PS: Have you become curious? Visit the homepage: <http://www.mip.at>

## Another project irritating and fascinating the European Cities

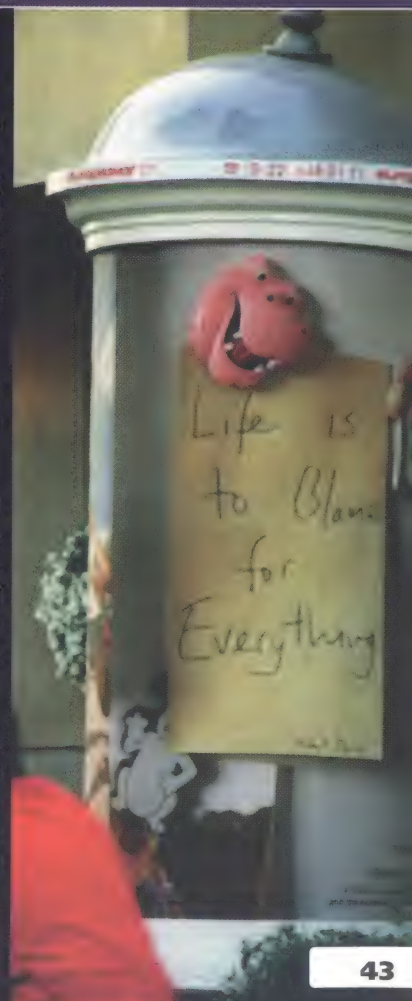
We all find visual impressions in our surroundings but often ignore them because of stress and overflow.

In this sense the idea of emphasizing this phenomenon is realised by a project that finds posters in public space not usually (immediately) recognised as art. They are rather perceived as everyday things such as signs, street lines or clouds of perfume. It is truly the most fascinating and stimulating thought that posters are thus turned into conversation pieces. They closely resemble a kind of heavy perfume, seducing and captivating us for a short time.

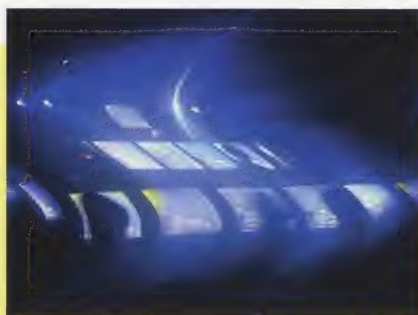
In 1998 Jeremy Deller's "Quotes", a project containing seven images which at first glance do not make up a conclusive series, were to be seen in many capital cities throughout Europe.

Their protagonists are, however, not the usual heroes of our dreams, and this is where Deller's work and common advertising differ. It is as if the observer is put in the position of someone who is not in the picture but is actually playing the main part. This main protagonist is the individual of the late 90's, living in an industrialised world where everything is not so rosy. And, as such, he/she definitely needs consolation, something to take off your mind – particularly when being young, don't you think so?

Deller's artistic method is re-contextualisation, Schiller and Goethe are part of a young person's repertoire just like a Boyzone number. "Quotes" is about a young fan of old masters. – A contradiction? Certainly a remix, which lets elements of different class-cultures and generations coincide and the European Culture appear in a critical way not to be so homogenous as it seems according to the myth.







# Electronic Sound of Vienna

by: Barbara Wimmer Pictures: Thomas Huttner, Barbara Wimmer

Vienna has always been a cornerstone of the music tradition. Despite tourist-oriented mass-entertainment and cliché of sentimental kitsch Vienna is much more than Schönbrunn and the Opera House. It is more lively than ever with its vital and versatile club scene that absolutely lives up to international standards. During the last couple of years a new generation of musicians, producers and DJ's has emerged to spread the vibes of the city.

Vienna has a really special sound which became famous because of the worldwide success of the producer and DJ crew Kruder & Dorfmeister. Their remixes for Madonna, Alex Reece or Roni Size attracted attention all over the world and also put Vienna in a musically important light. Soon signs like "weird Austrian stuff" were placed in New York's recordstores, and the Viennese sound could also be heard in the movies of Sao Paulo. Grace Jones, Elvis Costello and U2 asked Kruder & Dorfmeister, K&D, to remix their tracks, but they refused them. "We get so many inquiries for remixes that we could make one remix a day. But this is not what we want and that's the reason why our remixes get really special. We want to identify with the sound, and we never do something which is crap."

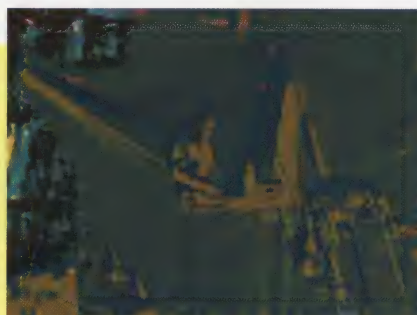
K&D, embodiment of the Viennese ease and relaxation ("Wiener Gemütlichkeit"), started producing sounds in their living rooms, experimenting with weird breaks and samples and the help of a personal computer and turntables. An acid jazz-orientated DJ from London who worked for a famous pirate radio station (KISS FM) liked the strange sound, which also appeared in Bristol (Great Britain) at the same time, and played it up and down on the radio the whole day. K&D try to bring pop music back to where it originated: in the living-room.

You may ask yourself now: what is this all about, what is so special about the Viennese sound and how does it sound? Vienna has a special energy and a special attitude. "Kippen" – the getting-lost-in-music-attitude is one of the keywords in

Vienna and typical of the melancholy of the city. It is slow-motion, downtempo grooves that characterise the distinctive sound. Funky, jazzy, lazy grooves with psychedelic dub-effects, imperturbable relaxing vocals. Hard cuts and secret depths. Playful loops, downtempo funk and chilled-out electronica. The sound starts somewhere between homegrown empty grooves and ends with dancefloor-friendly drum'n'bass samples. The music is deep, but without pressure. It won't hit your brain, but you get surrounded by it. As the slow pace of the city allows one to survive even the wildest parties, the all-evasive reflective atmosphere seems to be created by simply chilling-out.

Nevertheless, there are many more Vienna-based artists, producers & DJs who present a part of the electronic





<http://www.sabotage.at> -- Sabotage Communications  
<http://www.mego.at> -- Mego Label  
<http://www.stadler.org/KruderDorfmeister/> -- K&D  
<http://www.cheap.at> -- Cheap Records  
<http://members.eunet.at/bortoli/party.htm> -- Pong Soundsystem

sound. The worldwide establishment of Vienna's electronic sound led to the origination of dozens of different compilations like "vienna scientists" (sony music), "the vienna tone" (k7!, rough trade), "the electric sound of vienna". Marketing strategies and effective promotion are responsible for the fact that this sound has spread in all social levels over the last couple of years. Apart from commercial soundtracks, Vienna has also a wide range of labels which stand for an experimental sound far away from the mainstream.

Cheap Records, for instance, with the chairmen, producers and DJs Pulsinger & Tunakan, are famous for their electro-beats and diverse sound constructions. In addition to that, the record label MEGO, which started in 1994, likes to see itself as a platform for all kinds of information and communication carried via modern electronic media. It is more than music, an extremely great effort is put into packaging and artwork. Mego releases should be collected and experienced for many years and should not be seen as fodder for hopeless fashion victimized disc jockeys.

Unlike most electronic based labels, Mego does make an effort to leave the cozy confines of the studio and plays live. Peter Rehberg (Pita) has been Dj-ing at various locations in the Viennese

underground for almost a decade and first played experimental electronic sounds in so-called chill-out rooms. Christian Fennesz started his career as a singer, guitarist and songwriter and introduced sound techniques like free form improvisation and instrumental rock in a time when such practices were generally not accepted by the audience. They already played at festivals in Paris, Berlin, Munich, London, New York, LA, Chicago, Tokyo ...

The list of Vienna-based non-commercial but world-famous projects and labels is long. One more of them is really worth mentioning: Sabotage Communications.

Bored by the conventional forms of music presentation at events, clubs and performances, Sabotage Com. started to create new ones that always have a special slogan. For instance, they organized an event which took place in a former coffin-factory that had been made into a entertainment center equipped with a sauna and a swimming pool. The DJ's played their music in front of a naked auditorium in the steam bath at a temperature of 46 degrees. The sound equipment and the video

projectors were completely destroyed. So much for Sabotage which is now called Subetage.

But don't panic now, not all locations and performances are so weird. Of course, you can also find wicked techno and hardcore soundsystems like PONG and TRAKT at places where you would never have parties, free parties... and you can also enter a whole world of legal clubs where you can listen to drum'n'bass, electro, trance, techno as well as chill-out & downtempo stuff. Vienna offers you a lot of possibilities and, wherever you go, you can never escape the Vienna vibes. Off-beat-jazz, trip hop, wallpaper soundz generate the typical feeling – relaxation and coziness ("Gemütlichkeit"). Sooner or later, it won't be important where in Europe you live, the structures and names possibly won't last. But when Vienna keeps its peculiarities, the depth and the fame of the electronic sound will remain.





# All the Things You Are

Vienna - often called the "city of music", the town of Mozart, Beethoven and Schubert: Is it also a home for jazz? Follow me on giant steps through the city's jazz music scene, which despite its intimacy is a most lively one and where a new club is causing strong emotional response.

text: Christoph Irrgeher

The piano player is late. The skinny man hurries for the stage. The musicians start to perform, only to stop just two numbers later. "Helga, turn up channel fifteen", one of the musicians shouts. Some minutes later, and after several repeats, the piano part has won in clarity; a soft "Thanks, Helga" accompanies the action. As the concert goes on, the room in the basement of Vienna's "Tunnel" slowly fills with people. The audience listens to the singer's jazzy tunes. The quick-fingered solos of the guitar players and of keyboarder Gerri Schuller win the applause of the crowds. The "Tunnel" is one of those pubs where Vienna's jazz scene meets and many concerts take place. It is also a member of the "IG Jazz", a group of ten Vienna-based clubs engaged in this special sort of music-making. Not all of them are jazz clubs in the strict sense of the word and some of them offer jazz programs just once in a while. It is not easy to tell which of the Vienna locations is a "real" jazz club, and even when asking the true aficionados of jazz, the ranking will always depend on the person you ask. Still, there are some names which most of the insiders will mention when asked: There is the "Jazzland", "Porgy and Bess", "Reigen live", and "Davis" among the bigger ones, and "Blue Tomato" and "Miles Smiles" in the smaller category. The listing is by no means complete or final, though. Other

names will have to be added or some of the above-mentioned ones dropped depending on the viewpoint and standards you set when talking about a jazz club.

Just A Few Good Men? When it comes to defining the Viennese jazz scene and its protagonists, drummer Johann "Baby" Stojka is rather pessimistic: "It's but a little crowd. In all, there are hardly more than ten good jazz musicians here." However, this opinion is strongly opposed by most of the insiders of the scene. Christoph, owner of the jazzclub "Miles Smiles", thinks that there are maybe ten musicians of world class, "but in the national average it isn't too bad". The director of "Porgy and Bess", Christoph Huber, takes a less restrictive point of view: "There are about one thousand good musicians in Vienna and about a hundred with the technical know-how. We have a tremendously rich creative potential in this town". Also most of the protagonists in the Vienna jazz scene are optimistic when talking about performance quality and musicianship. Albert Mair Jr., keyboarder of the Austrian fusion band "The Funkmothers", points out the great variety offered by Vienna's musical scene: "The quality is fine. We have many independent compositions and sound installations. There are lots of professional musicians, all of them familiar with the different styles, and

there are lots of amateurs". Amateurs, who often prefer the old titles and thus add a sort of traditional element to the spectrum.

The Media Problem Heinz Krassnitzer, organizer of the "Jazzfest Wien" festival, is convinced that by international standards and taking into account the size of the city, the offer in the Vienna jazz scene is manifold and rich. The problem is, according to Krassnitzer, the audience and the lacking echo in the public. Krassnitzer finds an explanation with the mass media and their poor interest for jazz: "Radio stations just don't play jazz, and this is why it is so difficult to bring it closer to the audiences. How can a student or a youngster get into touch with jazz? For him, this music seems to be non-existent. A similar diagnosis comes from Wolfgang Windbacher, chairman of "IG Jazz" and director of "Reigen live". When he was young, so he recalls, jazz music was a regular element of the programs on channel Oe3, Austria's most-tuned-in Pop-music station. Today, the Austrian broadcaster has cut down its jazz offers to about eight hours a week. Usually aired sometime during the night hours, the programs are served on channel Oe1, which is primarily known for its focus on classical music and broadcasts with a high cultural appeal. In other words, a station less designed to reach the masses. According to Krassnitzer, the same holds true for the



print media: "There is not a single newspaper with a weekly jazz-column". Communication under these circumstances is quite difficult, but is lacking publicity also a proof for a want of interest?

"The IG Jazz statistics and our experiences during our last festivals, when all the clubs were crammed with people, clearly indicate that there is a strong interest for jazz music" says Christoph from "Miles Smiles". A similar experience was reported from the "Jazzfest Wien" last year: "For every concert, 370 reduced-price tickets for students were available, and all of them were sold". Windbacher also speaks of a distinct correlation between the style of the played music and the interest of the audience: "Latin, funk and soul work out well...the more puristic the music is, the more complicated it gets."

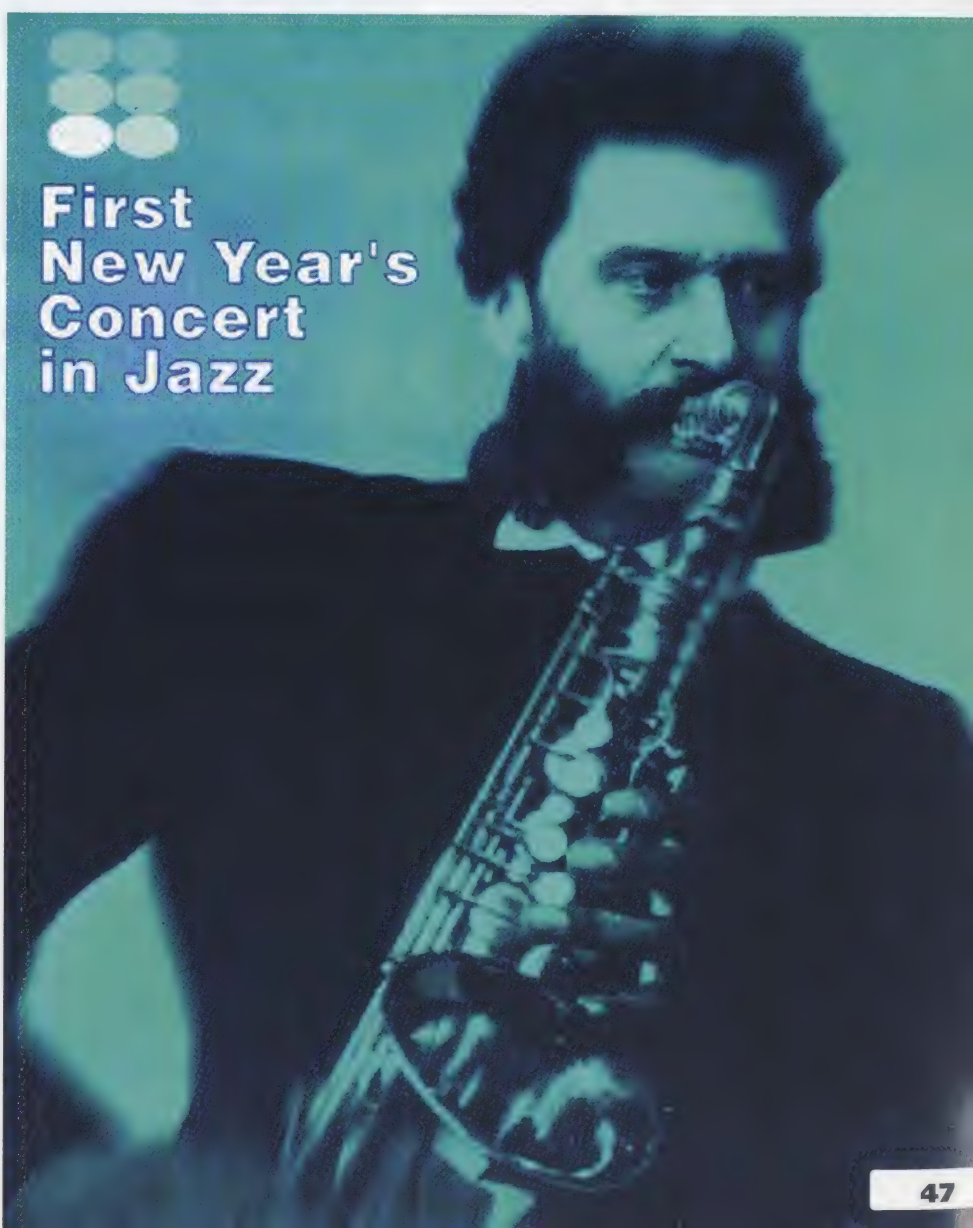
From "Zero" To "Better-Than-Nothing-At-All" There can be no doubt that the mere presence of interest and public esteem is not sufficient for building up the solid financial background necessary for organizing high-quality jazz concerts in series. That's why Vienna's culture office ("Wienkultur") as well as the state authorities are supporting the clubs and providing them with subsidies. When talking about figures and financial aid, Vienna's jazz scene automatically splits into two parts: There is "Porgy and Bess", on the one side, and "the rest" - grouped around the "IG Jazz" - on the other. "Porgy and Bess", established in 1994 and meanwhile well-known for its fine modern jazz concerts, receives some 1.2 million schillings (approx. US \$ 89,600) this year from the culture office and about 1.8 millions (appr. US \$ 134,300) from the state.

In addition to this, the referred to offices provide the necessary funds for the adaptation of the former "Rondell" cinema, located right in the center of the city and the place where "Porgy and Bess" will open this September. The "IG Jazz" group will receive a total of 1.6 Mio. Schilling (appr. US \$ 119,400) for their 2000 budget, which will be mainly used for their jazz festival this autumn and to keep the pots boiling. Fund-raising activities and easier access to subsidies were in fact the main reasons for the

formation of the "IG Jazz" group. It was in 1998 when Vienna's non-subsidized clubs decided to re-position themselves particularly vis-à-vis the - right from its start - much-sponsored "Porgy and Bess" club. In a written protest note to Peter Marboe, city councilor and in charge of Vienna's cultural affairs, they explained their situation. Marboe suggested that they should organize themselves into a interest group, and the result was the founding of the "IG Jazz" and the birth of an official subsidy. There are also grants for unique payments for building activities and adaptation of club room interiors. Says Mag. Bernhard Schragl, Peter Marboe's secretary: "We support both the small jazz clubs as well as the big ones. In our eyes, it is plurality that counts." Christoph from "Miles Smiles" shows little enthusiasm when the financial point is raised: "During sixteen

years we didn't even see a single Schilling. Then, two years ago, they gave us 38,000 Schillings, followed by 100,000 (appr. US \$ 7,460) last year - amounts which those professionally engaged in cultural work will comment with hardly more than 'Shit'. Still, it's better than nothing at all!"

Jazzy Hot-dog Stands? Asked about the rather satisfactory budget situation of "Porgy and Bess", club director Christoph Huber points out that other clubs put less efforts into the promotion of modern music and the wide platform it needs: "I cannot identify myself with the 'IG Jazz'. They run Austrian music bars while I am leading a jazz club on a European standard". While Huber spots the reasons for his singular position in the work he does and the club's entire concept, the owner of a rivalling club





attributes this fact to the excellent management qualities and social connections of Mathias Rueegg, musician and board member of "Porgy and Bess". Music journalist Ljubisa Tomic, on the other hand, cannot find any unfairness in the way the supporting funds are divided among the clubs: "Before the 'Porgy and Bess' opened, the really interesting musicians didn't even stop when passing Vienna". About many of the so-called jazzclubs Tomic mocks: "I wonder whether some day a hot-dog stand where jazz music is played will also claim to be a jazz club. When I look at the programs some of the clubs offer, I find not even one familiar name among the performing musicians."

Zawinul's "Birdland" in Vienna Much agitation is also caused by "Birdland", the jazz club Austria's most popular jazz musician Joe Zawinul plans to open shortly. The city has already granted 10 million Schillings (appr. US \$ 746,300) as a one-time aid to meet building expenses. No further grants will be paid, they say. The club, which will seat 300, is expected to open in September 2000. It is planned to open the place all year round, ticket prices will be about 300 Schillings (appr. US \$ 22). Bernhard Schragl's jubilant commentary on this new club in the "Volksgarten" right in the center of the town: "Vienna has already the 'Reigen' in an art-deco ambience. The classicism of the 'Birdland' will provide Vienna with another jazz club in a distinct architectural setting." Equally enthusiastic is Christoph Huber: "With the 'Birdland', Vienna is going to turn into a European metropolis of jazz."

Heinz Krassnitzer does not share this opinion: "In September, when 'Birdland' starts and 'Porgy' re-opens, there will be three jazz clubs with a capacity of 300 if we include the 'Reigen' to this list. Who is going to fill these rooms? Paris, for example, has only one jazzclub of such size, and this with a much bigger population". In his view, the "Birdland" is something which the Austrians use to call a "Schnapsidee", an idea born after having had too much liquor. Take the entrance fee, for example: "Who will be able to afford 300 Schillings? Students will come to the

Clubs: Porgy and Bess: mostly modern Jazz (<http://www.porgy.or.at/porgy/>). IG-Jazz (<http://www.ig-jazz.at>) with its ten members Blues Man: blues (of course!) 1190 Wien, Glatzg. 4. Blue tomato: modern jazz, 1150 Wien, Wurmserg. 21. Davis: different styles of jazz, 1210 Wien, Kuerschnerg. 9. Jazzland: traditionally oriented club, 1010 Wien, Franz Josefs Kai 29. Miles Smiles: definitely modern Jazz, one concert per month, 1080 Wien, Lange Gasse 51. Papa's Tapas: blues, country etc. The "Zu-Ga-Be" is a part of Papa's Tapas and is a place for private parties etc, 1040 Wien, Schwarzenbergplatz 10. Tunnel: jazz and more (soul, blues, rock, folk), 1080 Wien, Florianig. 39. Vienna Unplugged: jazz and all other sorts, 1090 Wien, Liechtensteinstr. 61. Zum lustigen Radfahrer: dixie, swing, traditional, 1130 Wien, Rohrbacherstr. 21.

Jazz festivals in and around Vienna (2000): In spring a "IG Jazz" festival is planned in association with Vienna's local "Bezirksfestwochen". Plans for the summer include the "Jazzfest Wien" (<http://www.viennajazz.org>) (end of June, early July) with international stars appearing in the Vienna State Opera and on other locations. Connected to it will be a jazz film festival. End of July: "Jazzfest Wiesen", a jazz festival outside Vienna, in Burgenland. Autumn: jazz festival of "IG Jazz".

club once in a month perhaps, but they will hardly make it a second home". According to Wolfgang Windbacher, the idea of free competition will be severely endangered, and this with official state support: "Zawinul's club will cause damage to 'Porgy', 'Reigen', and 'Jazzland'", he complains. Windbacher is also upset about the way the project is being financed: "I don't understand why this club gets everything paid by the city. There is so much money put into it although there are not enough people to fill even the remaining clubs. We are all sitting on piles of debts from previous investments." Even Ljubisa Tomic thinks that proceedings in this case were rather strange: "The runners of the other clubs are forced to sit on door steps for money, many times in vain". But he also sees the opportunities this new club is to offer: "There may be advantages, too. Zawinul has the important contacts to the world music scene".

#### You Can't Live On Art.

The musician Albert Mair jr. has a more positive attitude towards the new "Birdland". Benefits in his eyes are that it will help to advance Vienna's musical scene and provide the musicians with more space to perform. Asked about the financial situation of a jazz musician, Mair points out that it is impossible for

him to live by his art alone. This is confirmed by Baby Stojka, whose earnings from music-making are small, too: "There are just a few jazz musicians in Vienna who are able to afford to live on their income from music. All of them are artists who play and appear with the local stars of popular music".

Also a CD production is, according to Stojka, a difficult undertaking: "It costs you at least 50,000 Schillings (appr. US \$ 3,700), and you need good promotion, which again requires a whole apparatus of people behind you." Publicity for jazz projects is difficult to gain - firstly because the media interest is poor, and secondly because of many organizational problems: "Nobody will help you to get your name on the posters in the streets", says Mair. In his opinion, public esteem in Vienna is closely tied to the few "big names" or reserved for musicians who are known for having once played with one of the late dinosaurs of jazz.

A typically Viennese attitude, he thinks: "If you want to become famous here in Austria, you have to go abroad...or die". A statement to which Christoph Huber, director of "Porgy and Bess", agrees, but not without adding: "Nevertheless I want to prove the opposite" and, as a final sentence, "and I am sure it can be done."



# Rosenball

**O**ne of the most spectacular events in Vienna's ball season takes place on the last Thursday in February. It's the day of the Opern-ball, where high society come together for one of the most



## the Different Ball

expensive, most glamorous party. But it's not only high society partying on that day. Another group of people is having as good a time as the 'beau monde', but with less money - all the gay people of Vienna.

by Daniela Junkowitsch/  
Lars Rosendaal  
picture by: Stefan Zeisler

The Rosenball is an institution for all gays, bi-sexuals and heterosexuals who enjoy parties.

Thursday has become the day for gay partying. For 10 years the Heaven family has been arranging festivities, the so-called 'Heaven Club', at the U4. It was Arthur Singer who founded the club, and Holger Thor, the heart of the 'Heaven' network, continued his work. The Heaven Club is an important meeting place for the gay community.

So the idea to organize an alternative ball came quite naturally. Why should only high society, policemen, bakers, and other groups or professions have their own balls, but not the gays?! Thus, one decided to arrange a night of amusement and glamour with drag queens and more or less shrilly dressed up people, who want to have fun by

breaking the old tradition of ball culture.

Over the years more and more people came to the Rosenball; even Grace Jones, Boy George and Jean Paul Gaultier joined the party. The media, too, have started to show interest in this counter-party to the Opernball.

Consequently, the Rosenball helps to improve the tolerance and acceptance of gayness in our society. It's a tradition worth keeping.



text & pics: Martina Handler, Matthias Gantner, Wolfgang Eisler

# The Viennese Opera Ball

The Viennese Opera Ball is one of the biggest middle-European society events of the year. Nevertheless it has always been an open area for various attacks from differing social and political groups. There are plenty of alternative events, scheduled on the day of the Opera Ball. One of them is the Viennese Opferball, which was the initiative of the homeless-magazine in Vienna, called "Augustin".



Dancing Couple at the Opera Ball

**THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND.** From its earliest beginnings the Viennese Opera Ball has always been an international social event. Its predecessors were the well-known dancing-festivals in the so called "Redoutensaal" and in the Viennese Royal Palaces. These festivities developed out of the radiant festivals of the "Wiener Kongress". When the new Opera House in Vienna was established

in 1869 - by the efforts of emperor Franz Joseph I. - the old customs were retained, yet it took still another couple of years until the first event of the Opera Ball was held. At the same time Johann Strauss had already conducted his famous waltzes in Paris, which were taken as an example of the first Viennese "Hofopern-Soiréen" in December 1877, for which the famous Strauss-brothers showed their musical talent in composing their celebrated "Opera Ball Polka". In the following years the gala developed into a kind of mixture of the French fancy-dress-balls and the "Hofopern-Soiréen" with its legendary dancing and prancing. However in 1899 this glittering tradition came to an abrupt end. Not until well after the end of the first world war, in 1921, was the institution of Opera-dancing resurrected, but only due to the poor economic situation in the post-war period. From 1935 until 1938 the first festivals were celebrated, which were by then, already called Viennese Opera Balls, a spectacle that had never been seen before. The cruelty of the Second World War prevented further dancing from 1939 onwards. In March 1945 the Opera was completely destroyed. It took more than a decade until, in 1956, the first Viennese Opera Ball was organised. In those days the Austrian newspaper "Die Presse" wrote: "Basically the Opera



The Opera Ball-Opening

Ball is no longer a Viennese event, but a Cosmo-European now. A ball-night, for which the world is filled with envy." Over the years the ball has gained in international status. It has become an influential national event under the protection of the Austrian President. Nevertheless the Viennese Opera Ball has always been the target of attacks by various social and political groups. The origin of these attacks dates back to the nineteenth century, when public riots against the former "Hofopern-Soirée" were common.

**THE OPERA BALL TODAY.** Presently the Viennese Opera Ball is still a very controversial event. On the one hand, upper-class people take it as an unalloyed opportunity to represent their social status with as much glamour and glitter as possible and it also seems to be an evident fact that the Opera Ball is very important for the self-esteem of many Austrians, who try to bring back and

Riots



## Ball



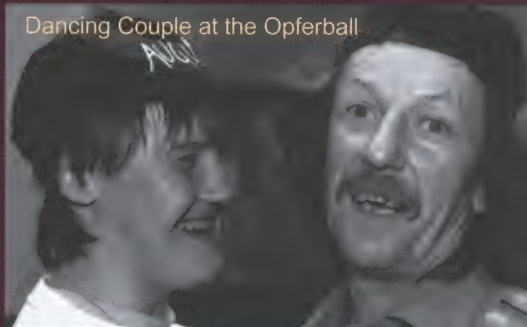
against the Opera Ball

relive the good old monarchy-times, when K. and K. Austria had been a political European superpower. Alternatively, this obvious exhibition of the social rift between rich and poor has always been a point of attack for "lefties" and other social minorities, who criticise this pure "playground of vanities". However, we should primarily focus on the fascination of the Opera Ball and its long traditions in the city of Vienna and the significance for its

inhabitants. There is, for instance, the very popular dancing-school Elmayer, where the debutantes of the Viennese Opera Ball, who attend the celebrated opening-ceremony, are trained. But Elmayer is not only famous for its dancing-lessons; it also stands for the traditionally all-important Austrian virtue: social etiquette and good manners. It is a great honour for many young people to participate in the internationally known opening Polonaise. Few of those who first try to be part of it, however, get through the long and exhausting selection process. Thus, after very many hours of hard training (work) even fewer finally end up at the Viennese Opera ball. So for what reasons do many teenagers take these strains upon themselves? This can't be answered in simple terms, but one of them is certainly the argument of prestige. In some upper-class families it is a form of undisputed duty to be a part of the tradition to open the Opera Ball as a Polonaise-dancer. This of course is usually more important for the parents than for their offspring. These parents are full of pride for their children, dressed up and smiling in their beautiful finery. Also other participants confidently seize this opportunity of taking part in the opening Polonaise, in order to meet Viennese high society. More or less, the Opera Ball is one of the biggest middle-European society events of the year, attracting as it does both real celebrities and their aspirants. Every year it finds great recognition in the local media as well as that outside of Austria.

**THE "OPFERBALL" - AN ALTERNATIVE EVENT.** As already mentioned, there are plenty of other events, organised by the alternative scene in Vienna, scheduled on the day of the Opera Ball. One of them is the Viennese Opferball (e.g. the ball of the victims), which was founded on the initiative of the homeless-magazine in Vienna, called "Augustin". In the beginning the Opferball was set in small and "dingy" locations, but after a few years it gained substance. Today it tries to copy the atmosphere of the real Opera Ball, like an alternative "spitting image", but it still doesn't forget to be a plenum for an open society. The fact that the Opferball doesn't try to move directly

against the institution of the Viennese Opera ball is a very significant fact in forming the identity of Vienna itself, making it a very unique and peaceful tradition. Balls, dancing and just having fun are part of the "authentic" Vienna; and this is a major motive for the "homeless" to have their own representative dancing-event just like high society in the carnival-season. The intention of the Opferball is not to rebel against the glamorous style of the Opera ball, but to bring together people of all social classes, in contrast to the Opera Ball, which divides them. So the main argument of the organisers against the "struggle of difference" is the affordable admission fee - and it is quite clear that



Dancing Couple at the Opferball

the entry is free for the homeless. A more aggressive form of resistance against the show-event of "The Bold and the Beautiful" are the legendary Opera Ball demonstrations of left-wing extremists, which reached their height in the 1980's. They usually ended up in violent street-riots between the police-forces and the young radicals which were, strangely enough, provoked by both sides.

This coarse behaviour lost most of its supporters in later years, and events similar to the Opferball, which call themselves parallel instead of controversial, have become more popular. So, in fact, the Opferball has no ideological movements against the Opera Ball itself. The organisers conclude that inevitably the Opera Ball will become boring and repetitious; and since the Opferball is considered far more integrative and therefore much more entertaining - catering as it does to a much wider and more socially colourful section of the Viennese community - its future is more likely to survive.



Nick Cave and his students in the  
"Akademietheater"  
(theatre of academy)

by: Anita Pani

# The School of Poetry in Vienna

## laboratory for a new generation

Mag Claudia Prieler

*It was in the year 1980. Christian Ide Hintze, an Austrian poet and performance artist, who has always been fascinated by the Beat generation, comes across Allen Ginsberg, an American Beat poet and manager of a poetry school. Torn between admiration and confusion, Hintze does not suspect what fateful consequences this meeting would have for his further life.*

Only after ten years Hintze accepts an invitation to the Jack Kerouac School of Disembodied Poetics in Boulder, Colorado. There Hintze realizes the boundlessness of possibilities offered by such a school. Inspired by this "literary Woodstock", as he now calls it, by this point of intersection in the American network of literature, where poets like Lawrence Ferlinghetti and Ed Sanders

flock together, Hintze decides to set up a poetry school of his own in his birthplace Vienna. In 1991, he finally succeeds. Europe finally has an independent poetry school of its own, enabling the cooperation between promising young talents and experienced Austrian and international poets. Almost unbelievable, when one takes into account that Europe's last poetry school, directed by Sappho in Mitilini on Lesbos, had closed its doors 2500 years ago.

### Had Europe left its poets in the lurch?

Why did so many years have to pass before this European tradition was continued? What kept the young European poet from learning how to write as an experienced artists? Probably a desire for an exchange of ideas had existed all along. But why

was this desire fulfilled in America first? Land of dreams or producer of assembly-line literature on call? Hintze talks about "a blind spot in the occidental cultural history", caused by the omnipresent image of the lonely anonymous genius, going his own way alone against the rest of the world. As one of the chosen few and therefore as an outsider cooking up something secretly in order to be discovered by chance sometime or other. A born poet does not need any education because his talent would make him famous sooner or later. These archetypal ideas determine the European concept of literature, especially in those parts where literature had always been considered something holy, something unimpeachable. Just the trust in his own fate set the hopes of the European artist on success. Ide Hintze had the



courage to turn away from these inward-looking pictures and to convince other Austrian writers of the learnability and teachability of literature.

Even if "the brutal term 'school' is connected to the oversensitivity of 'poetry' (Wolfgang Bauer, author of "Magic Afternoon"), these institutions do not have much in common. Hintze has repeatedly emphasized the freedom of the artists to design the "lessons" according to their own ideas. Especially the avant-garde of poets, who deliver one surprise after the other, are preferred. For instance, Emil Siemeister, who broadens one's horizons as a master of obscurity: wrapped up in complete darkness, "under the effects of chanted language", pens of light moved by fearless students, should leave invisible poetry on photosensitive paper. Their secrets would be revealed only by the development of the photo materials.

**"The Schule fuer Dichtung in Wien is not a College in the conventional sense, it is more a laboratory for inspiration."**  
(The Vienna Reporter)

Although the School of Poetry in Vienna took the American school as a model, methods and principles of course were interpreted in an European manner. The Jack Kerouac School of Disembodied Poetics, as a part of the Buddhist-oriented Naropa University, lays great emphasis on spirituality, performance and meditation. Being responsible for the artistic teaching staff, Hintze certainly invites poets from this milieu. Classes of Allen Ginsberg and Anne Waldman are well-attended at all times. But Hintze dissociates himself clearly from the Buddhist religion and describes it as "a romantic echo on the sixties". Even the American sense of community, which connects the writers in an amicable way, at first appears repulsive to Hintze. But the European value of individuality had already been rejected by the Viennese circle of poets, well-known for their

literary teamwork.

**The Beat culture, the poésie sonore and the Viennese circle of poets - remixed.**

Hintze too was swept along by this modern interpretation of literature and tried to connect modern European movements with revolutionary American ones. Next to the Beat culture Hintze supports the *poésie sonore*. Having grown up in the music video and CD generation, he is convinced that the end of written culture is near. Especially the new media like computers or the internet seem to encourage the tendency towards illiteracy. Viennese traditions, like the Viennese circle of poets, and the Viennese action painting had turned against the dictatorship of the word, in order to depict reality by new ways of expression. After the Second World War, a time of isolation from art, the Austrian poets felt absolutely disoriented. But in time modern artistic movements like surrealism and dadaism found their way to Austria. Above all Gerhard Ruehm and H. C. Artmann began to go into these new directions and introduced new literary styles like concrete poetry and dialect poetry.

On the basis of these modern age movements, Hintze defines his own four-dimensional concept of poetry: written, acoustic, visual, and infrastructural. Above all infrastructures like the Internet or a guitar alter the representation of poetry and result in a concept of expanded poetry.

In the Vienna's Poetry School, too, the Internet gains more and more importance. The new offer of the Internet classes enables young writers all over the world to participate in the literary exchange. (<http://www.sfd.at>)

**"The lovesong and how to write one"**

Poetry as a heart of the School of Poetry is mostly combined with other art forms and consequently appears in a new, never-suspected versatility. Nick Cave is one of the most colorful personalities who had always taught at this institute. He is probably the best example of the combination of poetry and music. His class "the lovesong and how to write one" ended in the *Akademietheater* with a successful stage performance by his students and a musical scene by the master himself. Apart from Anne Waldman, who combines the expressive side of poetry with the vivacity of performance art, Anne Tardos, an advocate of literary multilinguality, also left her mark in the School of Poetry in Vienna. Especially the offer of different

teaching languages like English, Russian or Vietnamese turns this poetry school into an international welcome center for traveling poets. But how long will it survive? To be or not to be - that is the question here, because as an independent project of artists, the School of

Poetry in Vienna is struggling against financial crises again and again. Since Hintze avoids any political interference, he has to organize the financial budget almost entirely on his own.

Only a few years ago students could attend two-week classes in September as well as in April. But the financial situation has forced Hintze to limit the lessons to the September-Academy. Today he is not even sure if this could be obtained this year. The wish for long-time classes fails in any case, because there is no appropriate location where classes could be held. Since its foundation the School of Poetry has moved from place to place. On account of that it is almost homeless except for its administrative office. Apparently Europe has no room for young poets searching for the truth. Will the European Poetry School take the leap in the next millennium or must another 2500 years pass until Europe would ease the road to success for her poets?



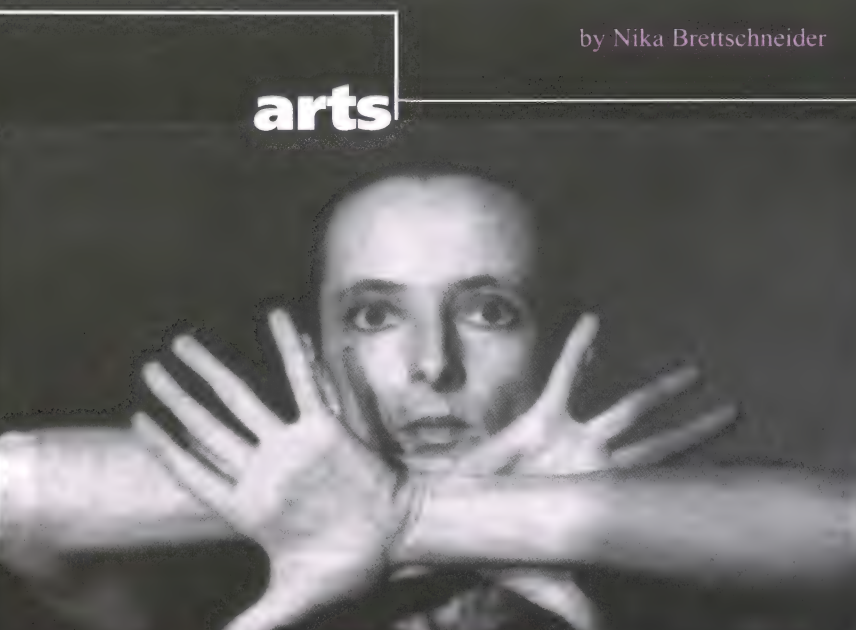
H.C. Artmann, Ide Hintze and Sonja Orator-Moor in action



Allen Ginsberg takes a photo of H. C. Artmann, September 1993



arts



You are walking along a narrow lane that gives you the impression that you've made a time-journey back to the late 19th century. Only the sound of the cars on the nearby road reminds you that you are in the present. And so do the lights from a pub, the parked cars, a man walking while using a mobile phone. OK, no time-journey after all. But expect to find a different and unknown world, nevertheless.

# Small Theater - Big Performance

## When enthusiasm is more important

by Heidi Salmhofer, Robert Diesenreither  
Pics Theater Brett Nachrichten

In front of you a big light-board is flashing. It's the sign of a small theater called "Theater Brett" - 'The Wooden Stage'. It was founded in 1979 by two Czechoslovakian refugees, Nika Brettschneider and Ludvik Kavin. In 1977 they had signed the so-called Charta 77, a petition for human rights in the former totalitarian Republic of Czechoslovakia. The conflict with the communist regime in Czechoslovakia eventually lead to their emigration. They arrived in Austria, not knowing one word of German, but dreaming of founding a theater. And they made their dream come true.

They began with pantomime to avoid uttering unutterable German words. What favored their acceptance in the theater-scene, against all odds, was their enthusiasm and love for the performing arts. After having learnt German they preferred spoken theatre but - remembering their roots - maintained their focus on gestures. Today, they are still confronted with problems, but of

another sort.

There are some big, famous theaters like the "Burgtheater", "Volkstheater" or "Akademietheater" in Vienna, which tend to supersede alternative theaters. Owing to the fact that they are supported financially by the Austrian state, they can realize expensive productions and sell cheap tickets. Unlike Vienna's small theaters. Ludvik Kavin: "When Klaus

Peymann (former manager of the Burgtheater) came to Vienna, he introduced 50 ATS tickets for the "Burgtheater". That is unequal competition and explicitly prohibited by European Community conventions. He fought an unfair war against small theaters, against the off-scene, because none of the small theaters could afford to sell such cheap tickets... I'll tell you

The audience is breathing with the actors







## ... than money

something, before that time, many students of Drama were coming to our theater. ... But now I often meet students who have never been to a small theater. ..."

So the only chance Kevin and Brettschneider have is to offer a "different" kind of theater. Ludvik Kevin: "We are trying to produce unconventional theater. This also concerns the choice of authors. Thus, for instance, we have attempted to bring authors onto the stage who wrote in German although they were born and/or lived in countries where the Germans were a minority... But it wouldn't be correct to claim that we're searching for the unknown. We also performed "Romeo and Juliet", "Antigone",...It's also classical theater that challenges a director."

But the small theaters in Vienna also joined forces against the big ones in order to attract more spectators. They introduced the "Theater-Tuesday". Every Tuesday spectators coming in pairs only pay for one ticket. Asked whether people were only coming on

Tuesdays rather than on other weekdays, Ludvik Kevin says: "Considering it financially, it's nearly the same. But it definitely means that more people are coming on Tuesdays.... but the most important thing is that a different categories of spectators are coming to the small theaters. People who would never have come to our theater if there hadn't been a "Theater-Tuesday"!"

So how do Nika and Ludvik get paid for their performances? As a small theater one can apply for subsidies to the city-council of Vienna. If you are lucky, you get a small amount of money for the next three years - not enough to cover all the costs, but nevertheless better than nothing.

And the inevitable question rises why - in spite of all those problems - theater plays such an important role in the Viennese's lives. "Because it's future orientated and by far the best way of performing arts!" Ludvik Kevin thinks that there are several forms of this new kind of art - movies among them, but that only theater offers a liveliness one cannot hush up or fake. "In a small

theater the actor breathes together with the audience. I'm standing, sitting and moving in front of them, not more than a few meters away. If the distance is more than that, as it is in big theaters, the audience is situated in another space. The audience and the actors don't breathe together anymore. It's something more impersonal, it's more like a movie".

The remaining question is whether it's possible to make one's living out of theater alone. "It's hard but it's possible. In our theater some actors get both unemployment benefits and their pay, because this 'salary' is so low that it doesn't exceed the limits of unemployment laws." Although they have never earned a lot of money, Ludvik and Nika have been supporting themselves as theater actors and producers since March 1979 and they love what they are doing. However much of a cliché, this proves that the realization of one's ambitions and dreams can make one a lot happier than earning lots of money.



The gasometers - immortal giants, yesterday, ...  
 © by Dipl.-Ing. Franz Lagler

text: Anita Pani  
 pictures: Dipl.-Ing. Franz Lagler, YellowFish GmbH

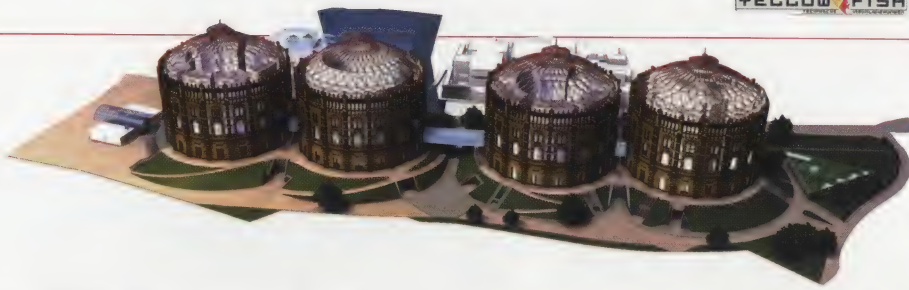
# The Gasometers

## Monuments of the Industrial Age Pioneers of a New Lifestyle

The four gasometers - symbols of Simmering, the eleventh district of Vienna - are a 'focal' point of it's skyline. Constructed between 1869 and 1899, they are reminders of the Industrial Age as well as monuments of great efficiency.

At first the gasometers were part of the new Viennese gasworks, built in order to keep the gas production under municipal control. Under instructions of the architects Schimming and Hermann, construction was started on 27th October, 1869. More than 1500 workers were under enormous time pressure because the gasworks had to start running on the 31st of October, 1899, the expiration date of the contracts with the Imperial Continental Gas Association. Astonishingly, the gasometers were





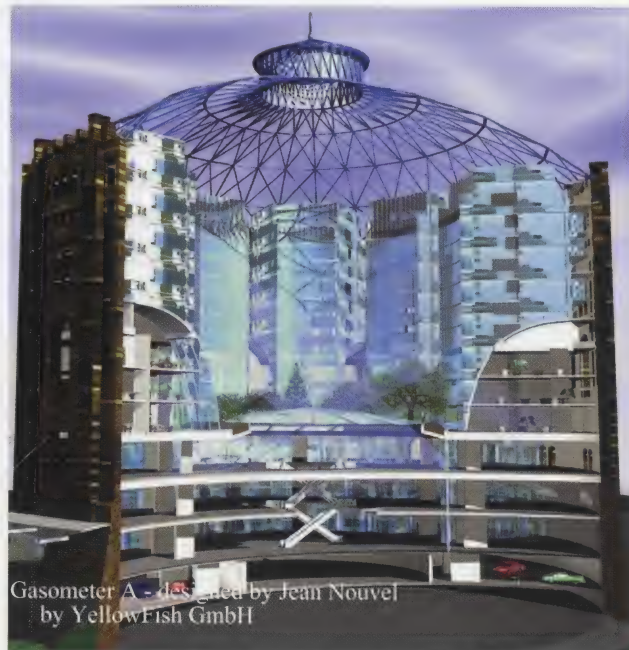
already operational on July 17th. The name of these monumental buildings does not correspond to their actual purpose. The “gasometers” were not constructed for the measuring of gas, but for its storage. The large, impressive dials on the front of each gasometer, showing the gas content and illuminated at night, are probably the reason for the common expression “gasometer”. The coal, burnt to obtain gas, was delivered through the Austro-Hungarian state railway line. The railroad lay next to the gasworks. In each container there was a 33,6m high gas container vessel made of iron, and consisting of three cylindrical sections, which telescoped inside one another. A 30.000m<sup>3</sup> water-filled tank made the building airtight. Due to iron ladders and galleries the inside of the gasometers was accessible. The gigantic empty space of the interior was dependent on the gas level. The external appearance of the brick buildings is characterized by the so-called round-headed arched windows and huge, dome-shaped roofs. The architectural importance of the containers is enhanced above all by their uniqueness. As they stand in a row, their centers form one line at distances of 69,8m, 100m and again 69,8m. With a diameter of more than 60m and a height of more than 70m, the capacity of one gasometer amounts to 90.000m<sup>3</sup>.

The appearance of the four gasometers may not have changed, but their purpose certainly has. About fifteen years ago the gas production out of coals was substituted by natural gas. Therefore the containers were no longer used beginning on 20th May 1986.

Today they are classified as a historical monument and still point the way to the future. Their inclusion in a large scale project of architectural revitalisation further increases the value of the four containers. In the future, with effect from 2001, the towers will house apartments and, thus, form a little town. The future inhabitants will discover what it means to live in a building which is considered a cultural heritage. Four

... and tomorrow. by YellowFist GmbH

famous international architects with diverging ideas were chosen to emphasise the unique importance of each container: Jean Nouvel, Paris; Coop Himmelb(l)au, Vienna/Los Angeles; Prof. Manfred Wehdorn, Vienna, and Wilhelm Holzbauer, Vienna. In the future the four gasometers will contain 700 to 750 apartments, a student hostel, a regional archive, offices and underground car parks. Additionally, each of them will have its own shopping- and entertainment mall, all interconnected with each other. Next to the containers a day care centre and a cinema complex are planned. To improve the



Gasometer A - designed by Jean Nouvel  
by YellowFish GmbH

quality of living, the penetration of light must be increased. Therefore the number of windows will be raised. Besides, the dome-shaped roof will be substituted by an open steel construction which should guarantee bright inner courtyards. Although the original external appearance will be conserved, the gasometers will have different inner arrangements.

The first gasometer (A), designed by Jean Nouvel, will contain eighteen building segments which will be placed in a star-shaped order. Throughout a large courtyard in the centre, aimed at producing an atrium-like atmosphere, the space between the separated tower blocks will offer the occupants a good view into the open. Coop Himmelb(l)au gives the second gasometer (B) an exceptional outer appearance. A residential annex, which will be a little higher than the containers, will extend the ring-shaped interior building. The basement will be completed by a hall for special events prepared to house 3.000 visitors. Prof. Manfred Wehdorn embellishes the courtyard of the third gasometer with a

so-called “Arboretum”, a pedestal in the middle, on which trees will grow like in a greenhouse. The last but not least fourth gasometer (D) is a creation of Wilhelm Holzbauer and is characterised by a central round tower block, forming the core of a star. Three courtyards will offer a great view out of the numerous windows of the old brickwork.

The gasometers - pioneers of a new lifestyle, ostensibly immortal, revived over and over again and creating new living spaces in their turn. It certainly looks like a new age of architecture is dawning in Vienna, condensing the city by using old buildings in a new way and by producing one tower after the other in order to shift the main living area of the town upwards to the sky.



# Heaven

## The Flak Towers Heritage from

by Christine Scheucher  
Pics: crystelle

The three Viennese anti-aircraft towers belong to the few monuments that bear witness to Austria's Nazi past. The towers were originally built to defend against Allied bombings. Nowadays the city of Vienna has to face an urban planning challenge.

Amorphous concrete giants cast enormous shadows onto the houses in the surrounding area - windowless, grey silhouettes, indestructible, water-tight. The six flak towers which are spread over three Viennese parks form a strategic isosceles triangle around the heart of the city. They belong to the few monuments of Vienna that bear witness to the times of the Third Reich. Built between 1942 and 1944 they originally should have defended against Allied bombings. On the top of the city enormous anti-aircraft towers boys between 14 and 16 had to beat back enemy aircraft attacks with special flak guns in order to protect the population and the city's most important cultural-historical buildings. According to experts the towers never served their purpose very efficiently. The towers could be regarded as psychology turned to stone. Architecture which shows people who were anxious about the the war that something was being done for the public safety. Monoliths that should

further mark the dawn of a new era. Hitler wanted to convert the towers into gigantic war memorials after the final German victory. Hitler's architects planned to clad the hulks in black marble in order to chisel, in gold leaf, the names of all the German soldiers who lost their lives on the battlefield. Towers which can not escape anybody's notice, where the script is combined with the stone - the language of the soil - in order to shout Germany's glory into the town for centuries. Constructed to last for one thousand years these ideological bastions still carve the cityscape after the collapse of Nazism. Scars in the body of the town written into the soil forever just as leaders of the Third Reich had intended. The city of Vienna, at least, doesn't know what to do with this unpleasant heritage of Austria's Nazi past. With its steel-reinforced walls up to 10ft thick the towers are supposed to be impossible to blow up. And by the way: social engaged people are even said to have calculated



### Unwelcome reminders of the past:

that the mass of concrete steel which was used to materialise Germany's power could be used to build an apartment for every single Viennese citizen. Since 1945 the Austrian government has considered more than a dozen plans for civilian uses of the towers. Several architects have proposed covering the tower's exterior with luxury flats and shops and using their vast interior for



# over Vienna

## Towers: an Unwanted Architectural Inheritance from the Third Reich



**Vienna's anti-aircraft towers**

parking lots, theatres or leisure centres. None of these projects have been realized. And the Viennese people themselves? They seem to ignore the colossuses. Consequently, the discussion about the flak tower's future stagnated long ago. The younger generation doesn't even seem to know anything about the history of the strange buildings. They integrate the flak towers into their

every-day lives completely naturally - as a climbing wall or canvas for graffiti. Foreign visitors are astonished by this exhibited indifference of the Viennese population towards the town's anti-memorial.

Indeed, dealing with Vienna's war heritage hasn't been that relaxed. In the 1950s the towers were part of the confrontation with a past which most Austrians preferred to forget. The Viennese citizens were ashamed of the ugly concrete blocks that spoil the world famous townscape with its baroque and fin-de-siècle facades. "History has decided to start once again after 1945.", writes the Austrian author Elfriede Jelinek in her novel "Die Ausgesperrten" („outcasts"). In this spirit the flak towers were touched up on postcards in post war times. Anyway, a very special solution! Finally, tourists who are confronted with the

anachronistic, misplaced monoliths search for the meaning and history of the towers in guidebooks without any effect. Because Vienna that's something else!

There is Saint Stephan's Cathedral and the Lipizzaner and the Riesenrad and fin-de-siècle buildings and fragile stucco and bombastic "Ringstraßen

architecture" and Sachertorte and Fiaker. The naked, dark grey concrete of the flak towers balks at Vienna's picturesque facade culture. And even if one doesn't want to face the towers, their cold, sterile monumentalism remains a source of disturbance. The towers dominate Vienna's skyline and as a consequence they are thorn in the side of several preservationists. And that's excellent: because the mental picture the Viennese citizens have constructed of their town was finally corrected by the townscape itself. If one is conscious of it or not, the flak towers remain important memorials of Vienna.

**"History has decided to  
start once again  
after 1945"**



"There is nothing to be done. You will deal with it all your lives, whether you like it or not. This mountain of dead bodies (...) ask neither you nor anybody else if you want to see it or not. It is there like a real mountain. You can stand in front of the mountain and say, "You are not here" – the mountain does not mind at all."

Ralph Giordano (Jewish author, born in 1923 in Hamburg, now living in Germany)

# The Presence Of The Past

## Austria and It's Struggle with Hitler's Legacy

by: Elisabeth Hargassner

picture: aspects of remembrance, part 2, Bernhard Schneider

**M**y grandfather was a soldier during World War II. He fought in the German army, the army of Hitler. During that time Austria was a part of Germany. Hitler invaded Austria in March 1938, renamed the territory "Ostmark" and turned it into a German province. At that time my grandfather was 17 years old.

I knew him as an old man who tells the same stories over and over again, and I knew him as the old man without hands. He lost both hands in the war when a hand-grenade exploded before he could throw it away. In an operation the surgeons made two "fingers" from the bones of the forearm with which he was able to grasp things. Only recently I was told that he was a member of the "Waffen-SS", a special unit not being a normal part of the German army but a unit of elite soldiers belonging to the SS. The "Waffen-SS" was responsible for many crimes in the occupied territories, especially inflicted on civilians in Eastern Europe. My grandfather fought in the East.

**Still A Taboo Topic** I don't know what he did I never asked him. You should expect it to be a very obvious topic to talk about. Given his disability it was not even possible to meet him without being reminded of the war. Nevertheless, I did not even try to find out if he was willing to answer and if his answers would be honest. Now he is dead and I don't know what part he played in that horrible drama that shook Europe, I don't know if and to what extent he was involved in the robbing, expelling, wounding and killing of so many people only a few decades ago.

This is something people in Austria have learned very well in these 55 years after the war: *not* to talk about *it*. Not to talk about the painful and shameful parts of our history. Yes, one does hear stories about the war and the hard times but normally people only speak about themselves and their suffering and not about the pain they or at least the system they were part of caused others to bear. Yes, there are memorial services and

hours of remembrance where officials deliver speeches, but you do not feel personal regret that often. And only recently Austrian politicians have started to speak about Austria having to take responsibility for it's part of the guilt as well.

### "The Sound Of Music"

**- A Deceit** After the war an image was created very much like the one shown in the film "The Sound of Music" (which is by the way an American production hardly known in Austria): the image of the non-political "good" Austrian. Over a long period of time it was the official policy in Austria to say that the country had nothing to do with those Nazi crimes because Austria itself had been the first victim of Hitler's Germany. This is not true. In the twenties and thirties it was a general feeling in Austria that it was a German country which should therefore be a part of Germany. Representatives of all political



parties were in favor of connecting Austria to the "German Reich". And when the "Anschluss" finally took place in 1938 Hitler did not have to use military force to gain control over the country. He was applauded by many people along the road.

The majority of the Austrian people were not victims of Hitler's Third Reich but perpetrators, profiteers or at least spectators. After the war, when the horrors of the Holocaust – the organized killing of 6 million Jews and many others disfavored by the Nazis – were made officially known, most people in Austria and Germany insisted that they had not known anything about it. But did it not happen in front of their eyes? Was it not their former neighbours, classmates and working colleagues who were not only robbed of their belongings but also of their human rights, who were humiliated and taken away to places where they should never come back from? Didn't they know to whom their new nice apartments, houses, cars or companies used to belong? And what about that concentration camp on Austrian territory, Mauthausen, with about forty satellite camps. Did nobody realize what was happening there?

And then there were the Austrians who were dedicated to the system. 693,000 people were members of the Austrian Nazi party (NSDAP). The persecution of the Jewish people of Vienna was so "efficient" that it became a role model for the whole German state. And it is an shameful fact that three quarters of the concentration camp commanders and many of the leading figures of the Nazi party were Austrians: Eichmann, Kaltenbrunner and even Hitler himself.

**Changes** Little of a true

transformation of attitudes is noticeable if one looks at the post-war period. Austrian representatives stated that it was not their country's business to pay reparations to Holocaust survivors, as it had been a victim as well. Little was done to help the real victims and unnecessary bureaucratic hurdles made it very difficult for them to receive the few payments that were granted. Expelled Austrians were not officially invited to return, while actions against the mass of less important ex-Nazi party members were conducted rather half-heartedly.

One had to wait until 1991 to hear a leading Austrian politician proclaim before Parliament that Austrians had also been perpetrators in the Third Reich. It was chancellor Vranitzky who distinguished between "collective guilt" which he rejected and "collective responsibility" of the Austrian people which he acknowledged. He was the first Austrian Chancellor who visited Israel and asked for forgiveness from those who had survived and from the descendants of those who had died.

In a way things have changed in Austria: Re-emergence of Nazism is subject to prosecution, a national fund for victims of the Holocaust has been created and a commission examines the questions of reparations for expropriation and forced labor. The Holocaust has been a major topic in school education and now it is possible for young Austrians to make their compulsory civilian service at Holocaust memorials or Jewish institutions in Austria and abroad. New memorial sites have been erected and May 5th, the day of the liberation of the Mauthausen concentration camp, has been the commemoration day for the victims of the Holocaust since 1998. But at times one still wonders if these

changes are not only superficial. If one witnesses the growing mistrust against foreigners and how little is being done against it. If one hears people protest against commemorative events because they don't want to hear about these things „again“.

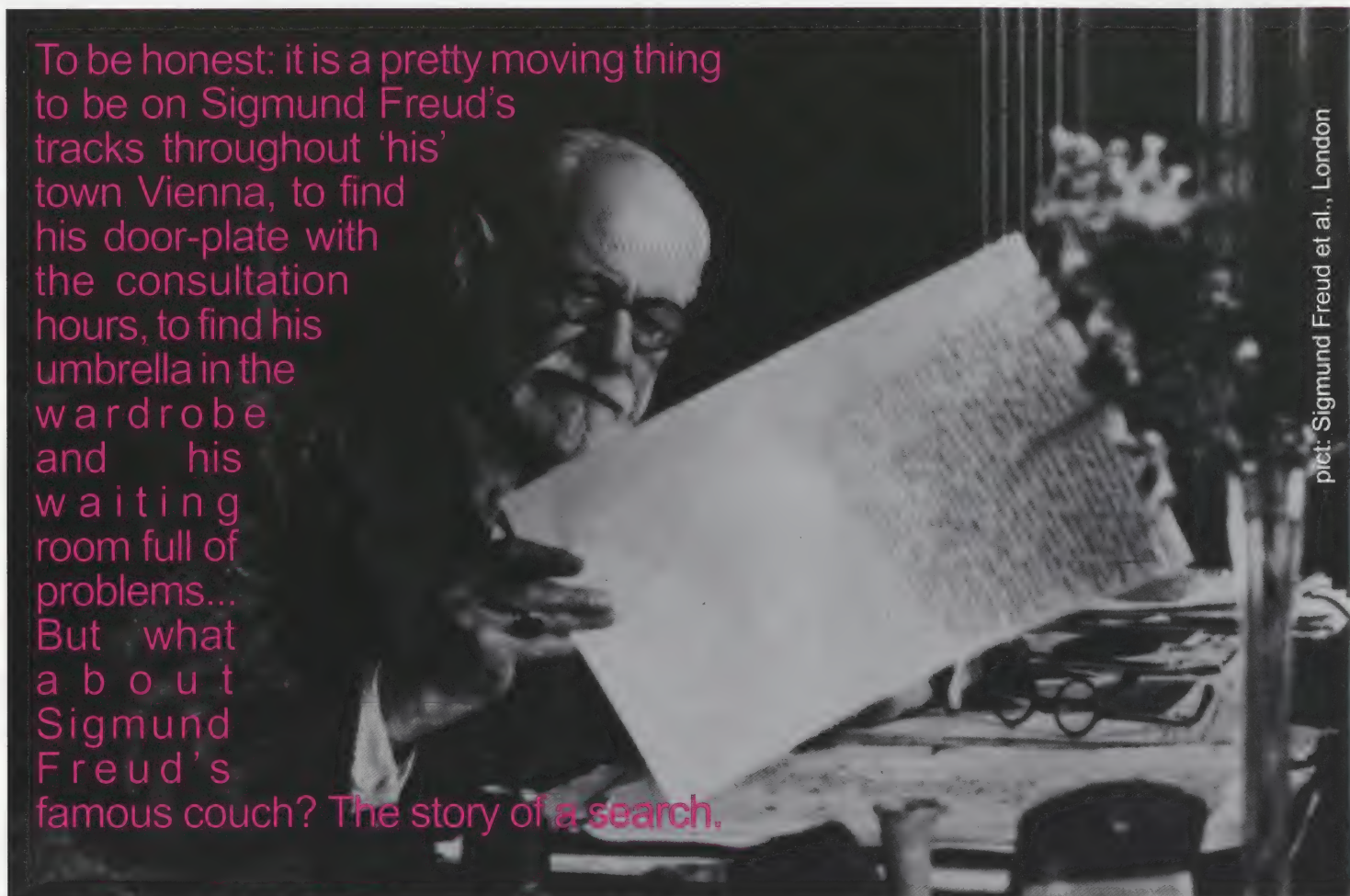
If one notices people offsetting the difficulties of their parents' lives against the suffering of Holocaust survivors. Somehow the past seems to be ever present, still influencing our lives, our perception of the world, the relationships between generations. There is this strange mixture of shame, refusal to perceive, justifying things, silence and yet suddenly wanting to talk about it. It all shows that the topic is far from being emotionally worked through.

**Moving On** But it's not about condemning the others. What happened 60 years ago in my country did not happen in a society of monsters. The majority were rather normal people. That's what makes it so frightening. "Never again" is a well known slogan. But can we be sure? Are human beings able to learn from the past?

I feel it's necessary to very carefully examine ourselves and confront ourselves with our own prejudices and cowardice. As the German journalist Gabriele von Arnim writes: "How far am I willing to adapt, to go with the mass? When comes the point where I turn around? Therefore, it cannot be enough for the descendants to find out that they are not perpetrators. We have to confront those who make too many compromises. That is uncomfortable. Because then we will have to ask ourselves the same questions that we ask our parents."



To be honest: it is a pretty moving thing to be on Sigmund Freud's tracks throughout 'his' town Vienna, to find his door-plate with the consultation hours, to find his umbrella in the wardrobe and his waiting room full of problems... But what about Sigmund Freud's famous couch? The story of a search.



pict: Sigmund Freud et al., London

Monday  
10.a.m.

There it is, the 'Sigmund-Freud-Association'. The telephone book, once again, reveals the most useful information for my investigation. I dial the telephone number. 'Sigmund-Freud-Gesellschaft, Grüß Gott', the voice at the other end of the line sounds serious, but friendly. I ask for the public relations manager. 'Just a moment, please'. Katharina Murschetz, responsible for public relations at the Sigmund-Freud-Association in Vienna, sounds like a nice young lady. She will take some time for me and my investigation the next day. So I got an appointment at Sigmund Freud's - sounds great, doesn't it?

Tuesday  
2.a.m.

I am on my way to the father of psychoanalysis. And, to be honest, I am indeed a little bit nervous.

## And What...

by Michaela Fleck

After all, it is not an every-day routine for me to visit one of 'the most important men of the last century' (as Time Magazine called Freud). So this is it, the famous Berggasse in the ninth district of Vienna. Just a small one-way street in the neighborhood of Vienna university. Cars are waiting for a parking space, people are walking up and down. Normal life. But where is number 19? I see a sign, 'Freud Café'. It must be there. Outside on the front two flags are waving in the wind. Red-white-red, the colors of Austria. They show me the way.

Just as I am ringing the bell, the door opens. A short dusky corridor, then large white steps. 'Museum', the sign directs me upstairs. First floor, a dark old wooden door on the left. Here it is: 'Freud Museum'. I ring again. A young well-dressed lady opens: 'Welcome'. I step in and immediately feel like being in another time. Tall but small rooms, a smell of antique furniture. And many thoughts and ideas seem to hang around. Katharina Murschetz leads me into a long, friendly room with books all around. 'This is our library', Miss



Murschetz points to the books. 'Today it is one of the most comprehensive libraries of psychoanalysis in Europe'. And this is also the room called the salon. 'Now, what do you want to know?' I would like to ask 'everything'. But that would be too much. So I ask Katharina Murschetz about the museum. 60.000 visitors come here a year. But 90 percent of the visitors originally come from English-speaking countries. Only 10 percent are actually from Austria.

'The reason is perhaps that in other countries there is more public interest for psychoanalysis and Sigmund Freud.' I shake my head. Typically Austrian.

'Here we have to work with all that is no longer here. Like Freud himself, his family and most of their belongings...' And the couch, I think. I have a

certain feeling, that it is not here. Not in its place in the consultation room. Just as I start to ask, 'Where is..', my conversation partner is being called away. 'Sorry, I have another appointment, but why don't you come again?' I certainly will.

Wednesday  
9 a.m.

No time for Sigmund Freud. I also have to do a little work for my studies at the

## About the Couch?

Thursday  
1 p.m.

university. So, what about Doctor F.? I promised to come again, didn't I? Let's go! This time I find the address immediately. I walk straight into the old house, up the stairs and ring the bell. The door opens,

I step in and again feel like walking into another time. 'Welcome.' I buy a student's ticket for the museum. 'With this ticket you can also visit the Freud Exhibition at the Austrian National Library.' A Freud Exhibition? Sounds interesting. But back to Berggasse number 19. On the left-hand side of the entrance there is a small shelf with colored maps.

'Your guide to the museum', the lady from the ticket office says, 'you will need it'. I take a blue map for German speakers

and go through a small corridor on the right-hand side. The museum shop. Then another two corridors. I take the left and enter a series of middle-sized rooms.

Photographs are placed under long unpretentious glass cases. No color, only in black and white, next to them there are documents, books and publications. These must be of Sigmund Freud's friends and colleagues. 'Psychoanalysis in motion', this part of the exhibition is called. The last room is dark, I hear a cracked voice speaking. This is the video room, the title of the film is 'Sigmund Freud, his family and colleagues 1924 - 1947'. Figures in black and white, a silent movie with a narrator explaining the situations and actors. Funny thing!

I go back take the right corridor this time. The feeling of being in another time is becoming stronger. 'Prof. Dr. Freud, Berggasse 19, consultation hours 5 to 7'. As I look around I see a wardrobe made of dark wood with an old hat and an umbrella hanging there. My

smart map says 'Entrance to Freud's'. My pulse goes higher. Are these the original rooms where he thought out his theories? The next room is called 'waiting room'. The colors are dark, a sofa is standing there, dark red. Above the sofa I see pictures and diplomas. Glass cases all

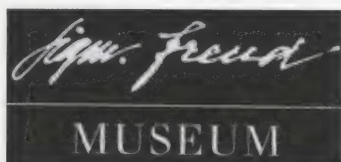
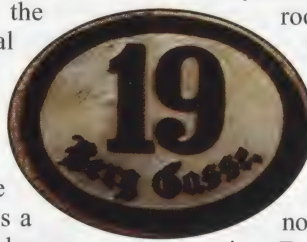
along the walls show Sigmund Freud throughout his life. He loved to have ethnic statues around him - a little bit mystic! The next room: 'Consultation room'. So here it must be. The

couch. But there is nothing.. I am a little bit disappointed. I remember Katharina Murschetz saying: 'They are all looking for the couch and are disappointed when they do not find it here'. I also take a look

into Freud's study. Small, dark, with only one little window. Outside there is a small court-yard with two trees. Back at the museum shop I can't resist buying a book on one of Freud's theories: 'Traumdeutung' (The Interpretation of Dreams).

Time to visit the Freud Exhibition in the Austrian National Library. I have read that in America there has been a highly publicized controversy about it. Katharina Murschetz told me that 'Conflict and Culture' has already been prolonged in Vienna and will be shown in Los Angeles afterwards. So, let's take a look. Three big banners inform about the three parts of the exhibition: 'Formative years', 'Therapy and Theory' and 'From the Individual to Society'. Glass cases again show pictures and writings of Sigmund Freud. Every theme has its own introducing video clips.

But what is this? In the biggest glass case in the middle of the room there is a couch. A not very long one with a dark-colored blanket on it and a chair beside. Is this...? I read the text on the case. 'Chair, used by Sigmund Freud during his London emigration', 'Blanket from the Viennese apartment'. And what about the couch? Here I eventually find it and I still do not really know, whether it is the original or not. However, it looks like Sigmund Freud's couch, and I do believe it actually is. What about you?



Friday  
4 p.m.

### Information

Sigmund-Freud-Museum

Berggasse 19, 1090 Vienna.

Phone: 0043/1/319 15 96

Homepage: [www.freud.t0.or.at](http://www.freud.t0.or.at)



# Vienna States of Mind

Vienna, above all is a city. Some people can't get around the idea that Vienna is also a state of mind. I'm not sure about that, because I have experienced all kinds of states of mind here, being an expatriate Alpine boy residing in Vienna as a student and job seeker. And I have seen people in various moods in the streets of Vienna. But if I had to line out a collective shape of mentality, a mode d'emploi for finding one's way through Austria's morbidly beautiful capital, what would I detect as especially Viennese behavior ?

by Simon Schreyer

Some people can't get their way around the idea that it's also a state of mind. I'm not sure about that, because I have experienced all kinds of states of mind here, being an expatriate Alpine boy residing in Vienna as a student and job seeker. And I have seen people in various moods in the streets of Vienna. But if I had to line out a collective shape of mentality, a mode d'emploi for dealing your way around Austria's morbidly beautiful capital, what would I detect as especially Viennese behavior ?

I think it might be quite useful for our quest to introduce two terms from the German/Austrian language that anybody who visits the city of Vienna should at least have heard about of: Grant and Gemuetlichkeit.

The first of the contradictive pair is dazzlingly negative and spartes with poisonous green and greedy yellow, Grant . Pronounced grunt ; ("pleased to meet you..."). Remember it if you want to, but you had better forget it, because it will come back to you anyhow, the moment you fly into Vienna airport. You'll realize that you have just entered into the realm of Grant by the strange feeling sneaking upon you, that the weather seems to be bad, even if the sun is doing its best and all the clouds have gone on holiday as far as India and all the people in the arrival hall seem to blame you ! The weather is never good enough for people contaminated with Grant. And

if it's a sunny day, it would be better if you were out of town anyway. Grant means that when it's spring, you want it to be autumn and vice versa. On the other hand, Vienna, like Paris, is one of the cities where bad weather looks better than anywhere else. A summer storm with a sky full of ink over a strip of brimstone yellow is one of the nicest things that can happen to you in Vienna. The place to be then is one of the countless "Cafes" in town. By the way, Vienna's most famous "Kaffees" are places where Grant is cultivated as much as the art of brewing really good coffee.

Grant can't really be translated, that's why I'm making the effort of writing about it. I could just say it means "grumpiness" and leave it at that and go play somewhere else, but that's not all. Grant is in a way Austria at its best, and it would be a shame to deprive Austrians of mentioning one of their finest feats of character. To be "grantig" is a way to respond to the incessantly surprising realization of being born Viennese. It's nothing less than working your way towards salvation by walking around it, looking at it and then going back because it's obviously a rip - off anyway. Grant is a curse and a blessing and Vienna is the place to find it. It is also a philosophical attitude towards the world we're faced with everyday. A person infected with our little disease walks around town and may look like somebody who just had his house incinerated , who was cheated on

by his wife and diagnosed as incurably sick with a tumor. Maybe so. He really looks it. And so does she? But the alternative version of their misery could also be simply and easily explained by the fact that the very last pack of milk for his morning coffee was already expired and had turned the daily vitalizer power breakfast into a squirming, curdled pulp ! O ye gods! Life can bring you down in manifold a way... And in Vienna a representative amount of people seem to have suffered a trauma quite like that every day. But dear reader, foreign to Viennese customs, that is not all: Because here comes the conspiracy theory: Maybe the socialist government passed out a secret law to all grocery stores to sell rotten dairy, maybe Austria's farmers can't handle their job any and will soon be replaced by a wandering community of Dutch Hippie farmers flown in by the EC department of agriculture, and maybe it was just his wife's carelessness, that is the cause of this day's foul beginning! And if anything like that shatters your hopes for a good day, you also have to show it on your face and pass on the Vile Vibe to your compatriots. For whatever dark reason...

Yes, there are many ways indeed to worsen the case for having to be alive in Vienna and of course a good deal of this misinterpretation of the good old saying "\$%"/ happens " is helped by the politically and economically well established Austrian gutter press, that





feeds those, who want to hear about it with whatever they want to hear. If it's not the wife's fault, then it must be the Turks, or the Russian mafia or God himself, who wants to take us down all the way to Desolation Row again! So, don't wonder too much about post office clerks who post your letter, as if it were already five minutes after closing time. Don't be confused, if you are one of the lucky people without a wristwatch and you happen to ask a passer-by for the time and he or she simply ignores you, as if you were asking for their watch to keep as a holiday souvenir: A lot of people in Vienna are like that - they feel trapped in little cages and act like it. And the happier you'll be if you come about a really nice and open citizen ( who might possibly turn out not to be a native Viennese).

After all, the revolt inside many Austrians against this self-protective haze has found release in creative ways: Take that notion away from the city at the shore of the Danube and you'll take away the soil which Kafka, Musil, Sigmund Freud and Thomas Bernhard grew their work on. You can't write "Trial" on the beach of Tahiti...

So much about Grant. Don't let yourself get frustrated by it and don't stay away from Vienna for fear of getting soaked in it. Being a person exuding confidence and happiness in Vienna is a challenge - every day you are there. And besides Vienna is on the rise: There is a powerful, unique

creative scene developing here - especially in the field of music and dance (once again ...). Vienna is where some of the finest DJs and Electronica producers in Europe are from: If Kruder & Dorfmeister are from Vienna, it can't be all that bad. The city is slowly, but sincerely accepting that it is a melting pot, integrating influences from East and West in an entirely exciting and obviously hip way. And at its very own pace. Which leads us gently down the Danube to the second term that we intend to discuss here:

Gemuetlichkeit is a standard of life, a perspective, that can be compared to the Tulsa - hillbillie expression "laid back", next door to "cozy". Still gemuetlich has got more relations to a certain pace of lifemindedness, than it has to the tactile sensation of "cozy". In generalised Austrian terminology, the perfect example would be sitting in front of the fire place in a mountain hut, snowstorm outside, with your friends, each one of them equipped with a fine blanket and a tall mug of steaming hot, marshmallow covered Hot Chocolate. Nothing is to be done except enjoying the evening no hectic or stressed attitude involved. Gemuetlich means taking the day slowly and taking it as it comes.

If you have read thus far, you'll probably wonder how such different attitudes can be "typical" of one place, but if the Viennese can be petulant and

cantankerous, they also have this special bonus of leaning back comfortably (possibly with a cup of coffee, since we are here in a capital of coffee culture...) and watching life pass by. Among the gemuetlich - serene things you can do in Vienna, the coffeeshops are certainly valuable institutions. You can spend hours in company of a cappuccino, watching people, reading newspapers and getting served the most extravagant creations in the field of cake baking. Taking the streetcar is also an experience that should not be postponed until you are in San Francisco again. Viennese streetcars demonstrate the exact speed with which the entire communal life in Vienna moves: slooow ! Biking is also developing, since Vienna has a picturesque circular street around its center and if you prefer joyrides in your car, take it out to the HoehenstraÙe, a literally handmade street in the woods north of Vienna. Take a couple of good CDs for the car stereo and off you drive through a magical, spooky landscape, where every tree seems to be designed by Tim Burton with ghostly scarves of fog in their tops when autumn comes.

Vienna is „cozy" especially in the autumn. It mingles its cultural atmosphere with the decadence of nature. If you have any ideas of your own how to get gemuetlich, bring it to Vienna! It will be welcome here. And besides : The more Gemuetlichkeit there is, the less space has to be filled up with Grant.





# Starbucks Versus Coffee House



text: Karlijn Hagoort, Lisa Gadenstaetter  
photographs: (c) by Georg Schenk

It starts like a fairy tale. Once, there was a girl. She was staying in New York for some time, which she considered a great privilege. One day it was raining cats and dogs, so the girl was looking for a shelter. It took her a long time to find one, but then she saw the sign "Starbucks". Well, this girl was me. On that day I was looking for a shelter as well as a cozy place to relax - in other words, I was searching for a typical coffee house like the ones I frequently go to when I am in Vienna.

**T**he myth of the coffee house is very typical of Vienna - in this town you associate coffee houses with coziness, people reading newspapers and waiters who look like remnants of the time when Austria was still a monarchy. If you go to one of the many coffee houses in Vienna, you truly feel as if you have stepped back in time: You are surrounded by red plush, very high windows and breathtaking chandeliers. You can spend hours at this place, reading different types of newspapers and relishing one of nearly 20 different types of coffee. You may order "Gebaeck" (which means pastry) - for example the Wiener Kipferl (a Viennese version of the French croissant), the "Kaisersemmerl" (emperor roll) or even the Wiener Sachertorte (a kind of chocolate cake usually served with whipped cream) - the recipe is, like that of Coca-Cola, a well-kept national secret. Anyway, tasting these specialties, you feel like in heaven.

So far the myth. Do these traditions still exist? Is it still possible to meet a waiter

who politely opens the door for you and casts a spell on women's hearts by kissing their hands? Of course waiters in tailcoats still exist, but only for the countless tourists. Starbucks is in many ways different from the typical Viennese coffee house, but this is not always negative. At Starbucks in New York you can find people from all classes, a well-paid manager as well as a poor homeless woman. The clientele is nearly the same in Vienna (apart from the homeless woman - you won't find her in an Austrian coffee house). There is one question I always ask myself: Why does the waiter treat the old man much better than me and my colleagues from university? Do we look like bilkers? Well, Maybe so, because the old man is served immediately, while we only get a very disparaging glance from the waiter. You can see it in his expression that he would rather be at home, sitting in front of the TV and drinking beer than serving people.

Another sacrilege comes to mind: I remember sitting next to a man at

Starbucks who was having a very loud conversation with his girlfriend. In Viennese coffee houses it is considered impolite to speak in a loud voice. If a group of people have some fun and burst out laughing, it could very well happen that some people look at you indignantly, others may shake their heads and it might also happen that the waiter rather rudely admonishes you or even asks you to leave. Loud laughter apparently disturbs the holy silence reigning in the Viennese Coffee house. The relaxed atmosphere, the coziness which is often mentioned in connection with Viennese coffee houses, has given way to hurry and everyday stress. Today people rarely take the time to go to a coffee house. If they go, the coffee and the cake has to be served within 3 minutes, otherwise something else comes in between - the typically Viennese Grant (grief, anger). And so they are assembled - the angry waiter and the angry customer, feeling aggrieved, hurt and disappointed.

If you take a close look at the reason why people go to coffee houses, you can find



## THE LEGEND OF COFFEE

There are many stories about the creation of the Viennese coffee house, in which historical material is mixed with legend. Georg Franz Kolschitzky plays an important role: a long time ago he was mentioned as the first person who opened a coffee house in Vienna. He lived in Vienna in 1683, the time of the Turkish siege. It is reported that he and his servant could escape through the siege to hand letters from the prisoners over to the Duke of Lothringen. The duke promised to set the prisoners free by sending 70.000 soldiers to their aid, and that is how the prisoners returned to Vienna. As a reward for his courage, Kolschitzky was given some of the bags of coffee beans found in the Turkish camp. The first coffee house was founded with these bags of coffee beans - so the story goes. But in reality, in 1668 merchants were already trading coffee, so it must have been introduced to Vienna 15 years before the siege by the Turks'. The first owner of a coffee house is said to have been of Greek origin.

The importance of the coffee houses in the 17th and the 18th century.

The first coffee houses were founded in the 17th century. Their development went along with another innovation - at the beginning of the 18th century the first periodical newspapers were created (for example the "Posttaegliche Mercurius", "Corriere Ordinario", "Wienerische Diarium" - the last one was renamed into "Wiener Zeitung" and is today the oldest newspaper in the world). These newspapers appeared twice a week, one could either have a subscription or read it in a coffee house. Reading the newspapers was not allowed on Sundays, so that coffee houses were closed. From that moment on, the coffee house has been a place for the privileged. It was the only place where people one freedom, the "freedom of the coffee houses". It was the only place where you could even criticize the rule of the Austrian emperor. One could find uncensored, so called "Wrong Newspapers". In the coffee house "Kramer" on the first floor one could meet ordinary people, while in the cellar, in the "CAVE" people were allowed to discuss forbidden political topics. The first literary coffee houses were called into being in a time of censorship when people were controlled everywhere in Austria. The coffee houses were the only places where people could enjoy limited freedom of speech, especially where politics were concerned.

another typical trait of Viennese people. Guests are not invited to one's own apartment, but taken to the coffee house. That's the only way to avoid guests getting an insight into one's private life and to prevent them from criticizing and gossiping about one's pictures, furniture, etc. People don't like showing the things they have obtained through hard work. That's the way the Viennese seem to think.

The phenomenon of "sitting in a coffee house and reading a newspaper for hours", isn't entirely accurate either. The paying customer is disturbed every 10 minutes by a rather impolite "Would you like another coffee" or "another Sachertorte for you?" while reading the newspaper. And if we are honest, our coffee houses are slowly becoming "Americanized". Beautiful old coffee

houses very often have to give way to new stand-up coffee places.

So I am sitting in rainy New York and ruminating on the good old coffee houses in Vienna. And while the rain is beating down on the windows of Starbucks and all the people outside are running by under their umbrellas, I say to myself: "You can criticise the myth of the Viennese coffee houses, but we all love to go there. Perhaps it's because of the strange atmosphere you find there". I take the first sip from my coffee and think:

"Besides, our coffee is much better" - but this could of course be plain patriotism, another typical characteristic of a typical Austrian. I say goodbye and go outside into the rain. A paper cup with tasteless odd coffee stays behind.

## Small coffee house guide

### CAFE GRIENSTEIDL

opened in 1847, meeting point of literary men such as Hermann Bar, Arthur Schnitzler, Karl Krauss, Hugo von Hofmannsthal or composers such as Hugo Wolf or Arnold Schoenberg; birth place of Viennese literature. People could live out their notions of decadence; pulled down in 1897; reopened in 1990, the old atmosphere has been replaced by a modernised version.

### CAFE CENTRAL

After the closing down of Griensteidl the favourite haunt of artists (Loos, Friedel, Alfred Polgar, Karl Kraus, Altenberger); place for philosophic and literary discussion, now pretty different - high costs for renovation, but the arched room where many artists had "their tables" isn't accessible to the public. nowadays it is frequented by tourists, bank employees, shop assistants, ...

### BRAUNERHOF

Hidden between old antique shops, it reminds one of the 17/18th centuries, the same furniture, a little bit dusty and antiquated walls, the waiters are still relics of the past centuries, there are a lot of newspapers, including foreign ones (for example The Herald Tribune, The Guardian, The Times, ...)

### HAWELKA

In the early 1950ies, meeting point of many intellectual painters, HC Artmann, Konrad Bayer,... all spent their nights at Hawelka, the furniture is still very old, the plush is scabby, posters on the walls.

### LANDTMANN

Expensive, renovated in 1980, a typical "Ringstrassencafe", very artistic wood panelling, guests have their own niche, very high backrests, small adjoining rooms where press conferences are held, regular customers were: Julius Raab, Paul Hoerbiger, Oskar Werner, Max Reinhardt, Oskar Kokoschka, ...

### FRAUENHUBER

The oldest coffee house, Mozart and Beethoven gave concerts here, very quiet place with carpets on the floor, it's like a living room with glass cupboards for the china, and of course all the furniture is covered with plush...



text: Joshua Korn, Katharina Schenk  
Pics: © by Georg und Katharina Schenk

# A Taste of Vienna

Eating in Vienna can be dangerous - at least, the food will certainly make you look like a dumpling within a few hours. Traditional Viennese food is full of fat; it has a lot of calories.

Typical Viennese food originates in a period of time when people's lives were much harder so that they needed every calorie in form of fat and carbohydrates to survive. Of course, a large number of traditional dishes have now been modified to less fatty versions, for example, many specialities are "paniert" which means "battered"; the well-known dish "Wiener Schnitzel" isn't fried in pork lard anymore (as done traditionally), but fried in vegetable oil or butter. Modern versions are slightly healthier, still extremely rich in calories - and delicious!

There are other traditional Viennese dishes which are time-consuming in their preparation; some of them are commonly eaten on holidays, at parties, family reunions or when guests are expected. "Blutwurst" is a sausage the main ingredient of which is blood (not unlike the British black pudding). "Sauerkraut" is a popular diet not only in Austria but also Germany; it is a fermented form of cabbage. There are various types of preparation; it is mostly eaten with "Knoedel"- Austrian dumplings. "Knoedel" can be made from bread,

potatoes or flour and can be savoury or sweet (filled with fruit such as plums or apricots). Versions of "Knoedel" are also common in traditional Eastern European cuisine.

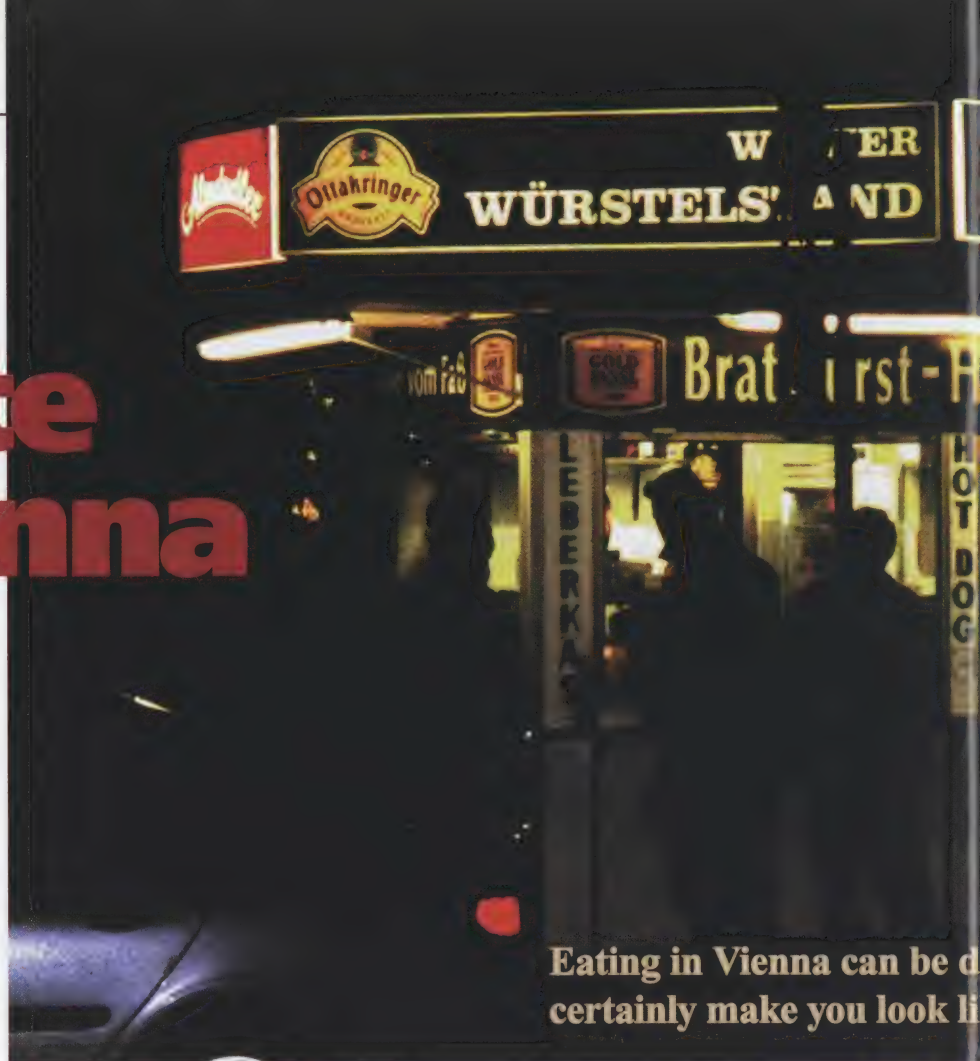
"Knoedel" date back to the time when Vienna was the centre of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. At that time, further Viennese specialities such as "Palatschinken" (pancakes), "Leberknoedelsuppe" (liverdumpling soup) or "Mohr im Hemd" (a tasty chocolate cake with chocolate sauce and cream) were created. Viennese cuisine is influenced by Western and Eastern European cooking, which illustrates

Vienna's importance as the gateway between the East and West.

It is not unusual during an ordinary working day to eat a breakfast that is more like a brunch



followed by a three-course lunch followed by a huge dinner. According to the "First Viennese nourishment report" half of all people eat these classical three meals without anything in between. The modern-day phenomenon of snacking and dieting, however, is on the increase in Vienna. These days, many young people - especially students - are more conscious of keeping their bodies in shape. The Viennese nourishment report



Eating in Vienna can be dangerous - at least, the food will certainly make you look like a dumpling within a few hours.





dangerous- at least the food will  
be a dumpling within hours.

found that 63 % of the Viennese students questioned in the study mention that their nourishment habits changed when they started studying and that the main motivation for these changes were health reasons. Despite the change in eating habits among the young, most people still eat simple traditional Viennese food at least once per week.

Eating out is very popular in Vienna and there are many different types of eating places - traditional, modern as well as international - and, of course, fast food

restaurants. Most young people in Vienna love McDonald's (and similar fast food- chains), but for many years, Vienna has had its own fast food place: the "Würstelstand" where

„Würstel" – sausages, of which there are many types such as "Käsekrainer" or "Burenwürst"- are sold, usually with different kinds of bread and mustard. People eat "Würstel" at the

"Würstelstand" as if they were standing at a bar, even at sub-zero temperatures. Going to the "Würstelstand" means much more than just having a snack, eating a sausage and drinking beer. "Würstelstaende" are also places of communication. They are open till late in the night or even early in the morning. All types of people go to the "Würstelstand" - from the homeless to the bank manager. Many people go there just to find someone to talk to. In contrast to fast food-culture, Vienna offers a myriad of Chinese, Japanese, mediterranean, African and Eastern European restaurants which mirror the multicultural diversity of modern Vienna as well as the "Gasthaus", which is an old- style Austrian eating place. The "Gasthaus" was used as a second living room in former times when many people

lived in cramped and substandard housing. It was (and in a way still is) a "home from home" where one can sit, relax, chat, read the newspapers provided

or even play cards with friends. The modern day "Gasthaus" is indeed very comfortable and homely, serving Viennese cuisine.

Of course, a taste of Vienna would not be complete without

mentioning the varied markets both Austrian and Balkan. The markets are an alternative to the supermarkets because they sell a wide range of food products some of which are difficult or impossible to obtain at supermarkets, such as exotic spices or Turkish products.

Eating in Vienna mirrors the life in Vienna, a mixture of the old and the new.

Vienna is a modern city, but it does not neglect traditions.

Having a family lunch on Sundays and holidays is still common, but during the week one may as well eat

Chinese food or at McDonald's every night. Vienna has a history of being a melting pot of peoples from different cultures, in the past from West and East Europe, but nowadays also from Turkey, Greece, Africa and Asia. All the people that continue to populate Vienna bring with them new and varied influences on food. Eating in Vienna is not always dangerous; after a "Knoedel", "Wiener Schnitzel" and "Apfelstrudel" orgy, try eating Sushi for a while. It is low-fat, healthy and delicious!

#### Sources:

-Erster Wiener Ernährungsbericht. Hg.: WHO. Wien 1994, S. 170-208;  
-Inge Lehne/ Lonnie Johnson: VIENNA- The Past in the Present. Wien: Oesterreichischer Bundesverlag 1995.





*"I love America! America is just great. Universal freedom. Freedom of speech. And you can go there and open your own business; make money. America is the future!" Paul, 26*

*"America spends money on the armaments industry rather than on social welfare. Somehow I get the impression that they need war to test the abilities of their weapons. They are very proud of the Navy and Army." Gabi, 38*

# WHAT

## WE AUSTRIANS THINK ABOUT AMERICA

by Monika Ankele, Miriam Houska, Kristina Wissik

### Opinions about the USA are as varied as the country itself.

**S**ome judgements on America and the Americans are uniform: America is more than simply a foreign country it is a totally different world. How do Austrians see America? Do we still dream the American Dream? What is still true and where do myths begin?

Spatial freedom – embodiment of the prevailing American mood. What else does America mean to Austrians? The USA is often associated with terms like decadence, dirt, carelessness, crime, profiteering and primitiveness – on the one hand.

"They seem to be completely uneducated in comparison to us. Especially as far as history and geography are concerned." Wolfgang, 32

On the other hand, for many Austrians, the USA is still something like the "lost world", a sort of paradise of unlimited

possibilities. However, mass tourism and the media present a distorted picture of America. And a two-week holiday doesn't give us the right to judge. Neither does watching American movies.

"I have never been to America, but my opinion is influenced by all those movies I watch on TV; but I can't imagine that this is the 'real America'." Roswitha, 52

"In fact, America is ruled by the entertainment industry. I remember an article printed in my English-book at school. It was about 'couch potatoes', people who spend the whole day in front of their TV-sets." Christine, 19

We can't just eliminate prejudices. But what about putting on a new production of the play "America" or "Austria"? Aren't we all weary of the cliché of the foolish American, munching white bread and drinking coke in his big old car, easy

to inspire and enthusiastically singing the national anthem?

"Fast food, McDonald's. Yes, fast food comes to mind first when I think about America. Most of the people there are overweight, especially the kids. No surprise! They are always eating crap." Hertha, 43

Aren't we all weary of the cliché of the yodeling, backward Austrian, dancing in his traditional costume, cheerfully drinking beer and picking Edelweiss for his lass in the alpenglow?

An American travel guide advises: "If you are planning to travel to Austria, be sure to take toilet paper with you. (...) It is also useful to carry some waterproof matches with you. (...) Beware of pickpocketing and criminals(...) If something unforeseeable happens to you, scream as loud as you can." (But you should avoid screaming at night.)

*"Everything's X-large! They have big cars and even bigger skyscrapers; long highways and endless roads. Even the word - X-large - is typically American." Walter, 29*



## Jay Leno

Jay Leno (shows a picture of Neil Armstrong making his first steps on the moon.):

"Who's that?"

AaA: "Uhm...that Armstrong guy. What was his first name again? Uhm...Luis?"

J.L.: "Luis? Anyway. When did the first man land on the moon?"

AaA: "Uhm...I don't know."

J.L.: "Just guess!"

AaA: "It must have been around eighteen...sixty?!"

J.L.: "Are you sure?"

AaA: "Well, let's say 1824."



We Austrians accuse Americans of ignorance of Austria - but do we know America, a country incredibly far away? The first step toward mutual understanding is overcoming stereotypes by not over-valuing them. Let's make fun of stereotypes!

"What we've learned from America is spending money on superfluous things, (...) things we don't really need. Austria is already starting to take over the idea of those shopping-malls, for endless shopping." Simon, 72

"It sounds strange, but I heard - as far as the southern states are concerned - a woman can be punished if she gets on top of her man while they are having sex. Ain't that funny?!" Gudrun, 21

"America is the land where all the stars come from." David, 8

"Americans are patient but a little dull and superficial." Susanne, 24

"They got used to long advertisements and use them as toilet-breaks." Peter, 17

"Americans are open to discussion, warm, helpful and polite." Horst, 36

All in all, one can say that we see America as a country of contrasts. There are things we adore and things that seem strange to us as compared to our everyday-lives. There are differences between the moral concepts of Austria and America which have an effect on politics and government. Maybe it's easier to rise in America as far as acquisition of wealth is concerned, but Austria has a better welfare system. All the dishwasher-turned-millionaire stories can't conceal that there is a huge gap between the rich and the poor in America. Modern technological innovations conflict with conservative views. Liberal moral ideas exist alongside with puritanical, inhibited moral codes.

"America is divided into two social classes. There are either successful people who earn a lot of money and can afford everything (...) and people who live on the outskirts of society." Franz, 49

"America supports science. The state spends a lot of money on research and development." Christian, 21

"I get really mad when I think about the

Jay Leno: shows a picture of ,Big Ben':  
"What's that?"

An average American: "Well,...I don't know..."

J.L.: "Where is it?"

AaA: "Uhm..."

J.L.: "In Europe?"

AaA: "Yes."

J.L.: "Which country?"

AaA: "England."

J.L.: "Wow, that's right! Which town?"

AaA: "Paris."

discrimination that's going on in America. There's still a big difference between being black and being white. The Civil Rights movement hasn't changed the people's minds." Anna, 23

"Death penalty. They even have the right to put kids on death row! Remember Raoul Wuehrich?!" Ina, 15

What we have learned throughout our work is that electricity also exists outside the USA.



